

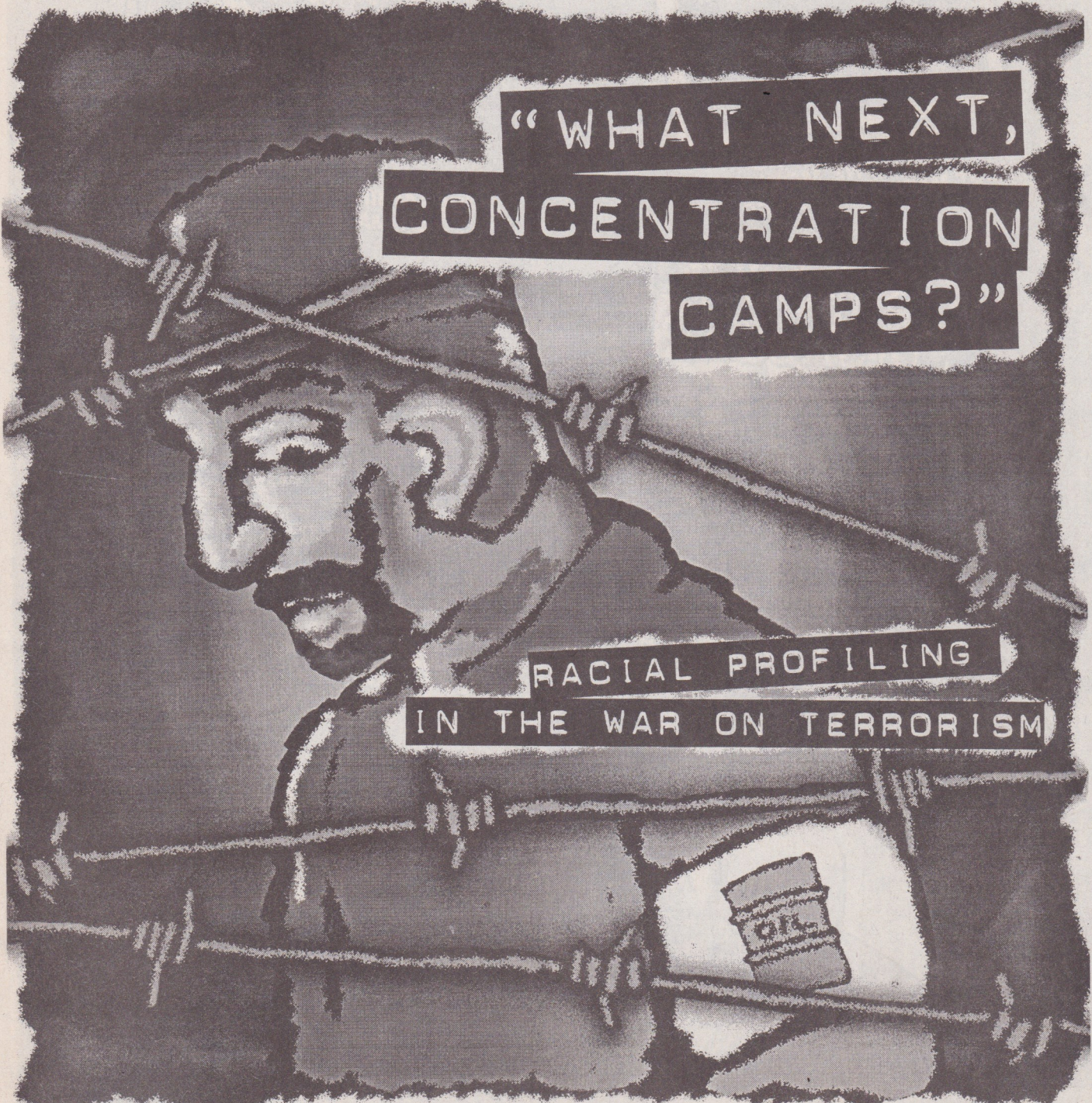
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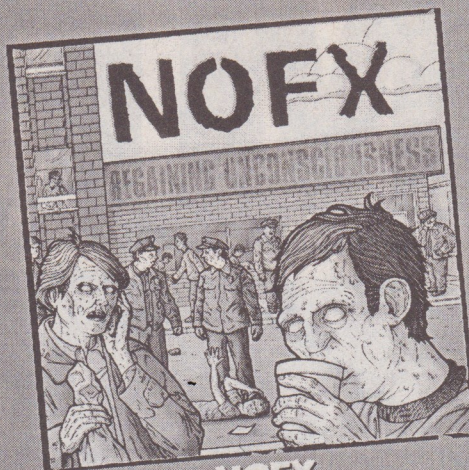
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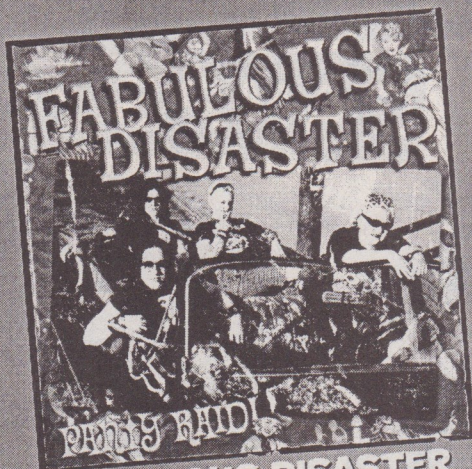
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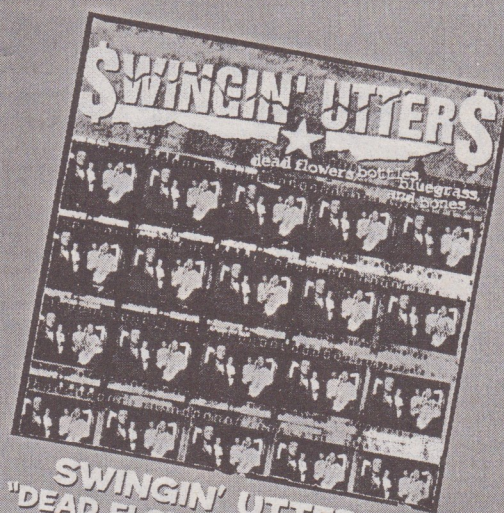
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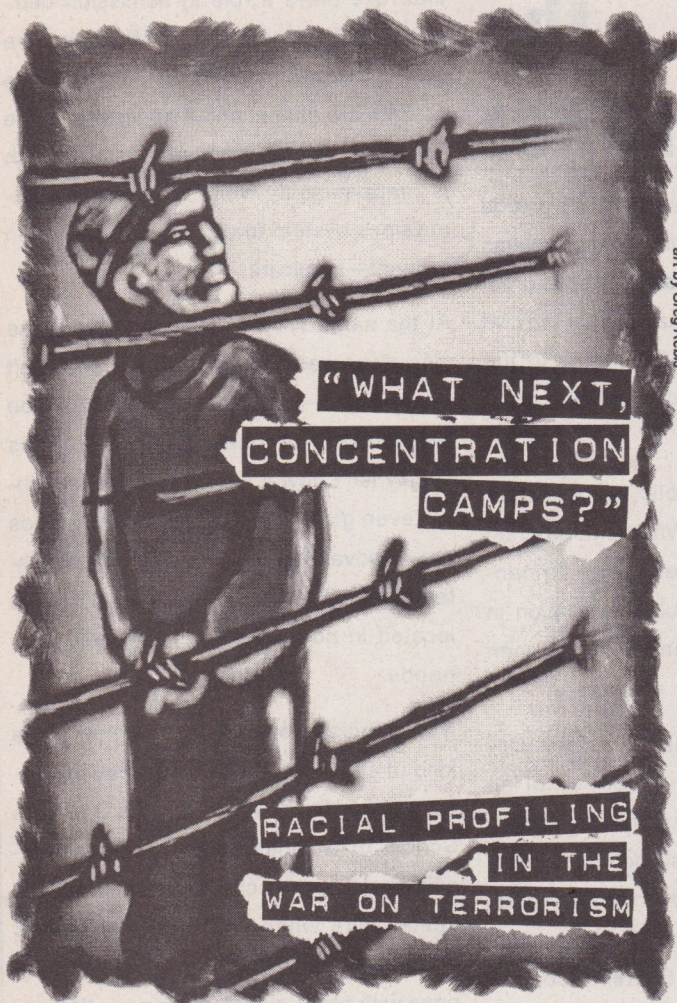
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things within

IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 43 • FEBRUARY/MARCH 2003



by Kari Lydersen

African American men and women have bitterly joked about the "DWB" phenomenon for decades—the fact that at any time they are subject to being pulled over for the crime of Driving While Black. Just as the government is finally able to admit that it is wrong to arrest people for DWB, it seems a new crime has been invented as part of the War on Terrorism. Call it EWA or just EWI. Existing While Arab, or more generally Existing While Immigrant. • PAGE 22

"To those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists, for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America's enemies and pause to America's friends." -- John Ashcroft, Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, December 6, 2001

"When the tyrant has disposed of foreign enemies by conquest or treaty, and there is nothing to fear from them, then he is always stirring up some war or other, in order that the people may require a leader." -- Plato, 347 B.C.

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IMPACT press

covering issues the way the media should

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A Fact from IMPACT: The World Health Organization reports that 3 million people now die each year from the effects of air pollution. This is three times the 1 million who die each year in automobile accidents.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From the Editor

February is Black History Month. It's a good time to reflect on the continuing problems faced by African-Americans. Despite great strides that have been made since the civil rights movement, now fifty years in the past, America is still faced with the problem of racism.

It was in 1954 that public schools were finally desegregated. While that has had a profound affect on allowing African-Americans access to public education in K-12 classes, it has done nothing to open colleges to those same children.

Then along came affirmative action. Opportunities opened for minorities of all kinds, not just African-Americans; opportunities that had previously not been there. However, our current administration, with Dictator George W. Bush at the helm, submitted a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in mid-January 2003 making clear their stance against affirmative action.

"The White House is again talking out of both sides of its mouth," said LaShawn Warren, an ACLU Legislative Counsel. "The President loves to opine about his 'commitment to racial justice' but, at practically every turn, he backs policies that contradict his stated convictions. His position spells disaster for racial equality in America."

The White House was responding to a case filed by several white plaintiffs whose challenge to affirmative action programs in the University of Michigan's admissions

system will be decided by the Supreme Court this year. And while it is indeed true that race plays a role in admission decisions at the University of Michigan, the school also awards points if the applicant's parents are alumni and if applicants come from the upper peninsula of the state, which is predominantly white, skewing the admissions system toward white—and often affluent—applicants.

At the same time, I do understand those who disagree and feel that race shouldn't be a factor—that admissions should be decided only on qualifications. But this simply isn't how it works. And that's without even going into the fact that minorities are disadvantaged by a public school system that doesn't invest properly in schools located in poor, often minority, neighborhoods.

It's such disadvantages that beg for some kind of solution. A recent study by professors at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that resumes with white-sounding first names elicited 50 percent more responses than ones with black-sounding names. "White-sounding" names used included Brett, Anne and Jill while the "black-sounding" names included Tamika, Aisha and Tyrone.

Who's to say that this same kind of workplace discrimination isn't happening with admission boards? It's highly likely that this kind of discrimination is taking place.

So what's the answer? Affirmative action isn't the perfect solution. However, until we address the disparity between public school funding for low-income neighborhoods and we truly do away with racism in our country, it is the best option we have.

• craig mazer •

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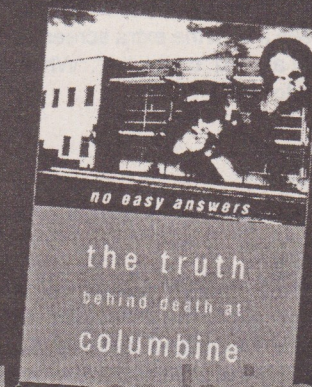
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the truth no easy answers the truth behind death at columbine

brooks brown & rob merritt

Brooks Brown graduated from Columbine High School in 1999. Most recently, Brooks worked and consulted on Michael Moore's latest documentary, called *Bowling for Columbine*. He lives in Littleton, Colorado.

Rob Merritt graduated from the University of Iowa School of Journalism in 1998 and currently works as a newspaper writer in Marshalltown, Iowa.



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IMPACT:

I agree with Mr. Morris Sullivan's appraisal of the new Homeland Security laws and how they affect us. ("Notes From the Cultural Wasteland" Issue #42)

I have been "targeted for additional random screening" seven out of the last eight times I have flown on US airlines. I am told when I pick up my round trip ticket purchased three to four weeks earlier that I am to receive additional screening prior to flight. Seven out of eight times is not random to my way of thinking.

Like Mr. Sullivan notes, now I must be on a list someplace for some reason. How can I find out why I am on the list? - Who do I speak with? - How can I get off the list? Homeland Security has become this large gray omni-present cloud that cloaks their actions by creating fear in the populace.

Fear is the barrier which prevents people from moving from a state of lack of knowledge and control to a positive position of knowledge and control of their lives. The drum of terrorism is being sounded to keep the American people in a constant state of fear and therefore easier to control.

I appreciated Mr. Sullivan's article because I feel as threatened as he does. I will check my statistics on the next flight and see if I get the extra screening just to see if I am still "on the list". What are you going to do?

Thank you.
Art Krenzel

IMPACT:

I read Mr. Morris Sullivan's paranoid rantings about the Bush administration and the Homeland security act. I sincerely hope they all come true-especially for him. I hope he gets sent to Guantanamo, and that his screams carry to Key West.

Clarence Long, GM-15, SAF/GCQ, Air Force

IMPACT:

Well just reading your nonsense made

me feel that you are still writing for a high school rag. And who's ever heard of Impact Press anyways - why don't you apply for a job at a real newspaper and see if they think you write better than a high schooler either.

Jim Stewart, Verizon Communications

IMPACT:

I read with great interest your article on your paranoia of impending home security legislation, and even though I am not an American, and a Muslim, I feel that I share your paranoia. In the Arab and Muslim world we feel today as outcasts, and I am glad I am not living now in the midst of all the hate targeted against the Muslims in the US. I would be then in a psychosis. I lived fifteen years in the states, and found the American people to be the most tolerant and peaceful people in the world. Therefore I fail to understand the current hype of war to the world, particularly to the Muslim world, that is waged today in Washington which in the past would hardly immanate from the United States.

I attended a lecture by the Editor of the Economist (Bill Emmott) last night, and I was struck by his amazing optimism. I told him I wish I shared his optimism. Living in the Middle East with daily killing and destruction of Palestinian lives and homes, and the overhanging of war against Iraq, all seems to me to suggest the legitimacy of exporting war, at least toward Islamic countries. Therefore I told him he shouldn't celebrate because we are witnessing the end of the liberal age that was built after the end of the second world war. We certainly entering a new world, in which individuals share their humanity, but states share their ruthlessness.

With Best Regards,
Dr. Ahmed Abdulla
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

IMPACT:

I read your article "Who is the Real Enemy?" in Impact Press Dec/Jan (Issue #42) with great interest. All the facts you state are sadly true but I beg to differ with you on one point. You write: "...Caucasians?

sians?, you'd better guess again." This is where I disagree with you.

In short when any group is disenfranchised, marginalized, not listened to, "dissed," minimalized or otherwise treated with disdain or contempt, that group will feel rage. With nowhere to place this rage, they begin infighting; a clever strategy employed, be it consciously or subconsciously, by their detractors. This is a result of the helplessness, and impotence they feel. Their needs: changes in living, working and legal conditions lead to rage that has to be placed somewhere. Blacks (and indeed women, gays, and other "minorities" are systematically taught self-loathing and devaluation by a white, patriarchal global community and have been for centuries. Yes, they kill, maim and disrespect each other but I believe it is in response to the lack of respect from outside their community. Some mother animals eat their young when under stressful, life-threatening conditions

You also write "... the punishment Blacks receive when the victim is White is far more severe than if the victim is Black. Does this mean that an African-American's life is worth less in comparison to their White counterparts?" Look at the majority of judges, juries and lawmakers—what color are they? You should have your answer.

While I agree with the over-all plea you make to Blacks, I don't agree that they should be blamed. That appears to take the focus off the real culprit. While I believe Blacks should and can love and respect themselves, they should also know and acknowledge the roots of their self-denigration.

Hilma Ruby
Madison Hgts., MI

PS: I love the African proverb included in the article: "If there is no enemy within, the enemy outside cannot hurt you." How wise.

IMPACT:

What an extraordinary article ("From the Editor" Issue #42). I wish to see many of these types of articles in all major

Speak Your Mind. . .

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papers, magazines and radio/TV shows. It is about time for our leaders to start awakening to the fact we are all sharing a brief moment on this Earth, and hopefully there are many generations to come.

I hope your article starts circulating around all the USA right now, people are being selfish, there is no consciousness, but nobody is really trying hard to create an awareness. This should be done with a balance, unfortunately the ones dedicating their lives to this cause are seen as extremist conservationists and there is no respect for them.

This oil craze is taking us to war, I feel ashamed as an American of the real motifs behind war right now! Instead we should be spending millions developing alternative sources of Energy. Look at Australia's news today. That is wonderful and encouraging!

Mercedes Meier

IMPACT:

This editorial ("From the Editor" Issue #42) was very powerful and I believe that it could begin to turn many heads that are currently locked in the forward position. I sincerely hope that enough people see this and act to make a difference. Being 17, I see the world that my generation is bound to take over and I don't like it one bit. If we don't change now, there will be no time, in fact - we're already getting a late start. Every war as far as I can recall (I'm only 17 mind you) and even a lot of those I've read in textbooks or heard from teachers are honestly all about oil. Oil may be the way we do things, but it's time for someone to pour some sugar in the gas tank of this well-oiled machine. I have written a few editorials and been involved in an "underground newspaper" at my high school and find your publication to be amazing and inspiring.

Nic Hallanger

IMPACT:

I read your article "From the Editor" (Issue #42) and mostly agree. However, I disagree with the bandwagon SUV

bashing. Not everyone lives in the city in a nice sunny warm environment. Some of us live in the country on farms and ranches and have legitimate needs for light to moderately heavy duty trucks and need 4-wheel drive vehicles for mud, snow, steepness of slope, pulling heavy loads, etc. (and I don't mean just for recreation purposes). I agree 100% that the average city, suburban, and even rural household does not need a full-size SUV to drive out to dinner or drive kids to sports and school events. Yes, that is a crime, but don't lump all SUVs and light trucks into the "bad for the environment" category. If you are going to bash SUVs, then bash all the other wasteful forms of energy also. Would I buy an SUV alternative fuel vehicle if one was available? In a heartbeat if I could afford it, but to my knowledge they are not available. I can hardly wait till 2005 when the alternative vehicles are available. Until then, for some of us there are not good alternatives, which by the way, seem to be lacking from your article. You rightfully put a major part of the blame on the national energy policy, but why not on households that flaunt the use of SUVs instead of a blanket approach that all SUVs are bad.

Frank Bonner

IMPACT:

I am a bartender. I know the effects of both alcohol and marijuana. If someone asked me which one I would make illegal it would be alcohol. There wouldn't even be a hesitation in my thought process. Don't get me wrong. Both can cause a car accident. However, alcohol is most likely going to cause an accident at a high speed. Marijuana would be more likely to cause an accident at a slower speed. Alcohol also makes many people violent. Marijuana does not. This is not about whether marijuana is ok to smoke. This is about the lesser of two or more evils. This is about money. This is about culture change. This is about taking a baby step towards creating a lack of need for drugs of any kind. The need for drugs is a dysfunctional issue with physical and financial ramifications. If we as a culture were mentally sound we would not want to escape reality. We would deal with life in a more healthy way. We would find

enjoyment in the simple things in life. Self esteem building habits would part of everyday living for everyone. All the things in life we try to avoid or fix with drugs would be understood for what they are. With this understanding would come the knowledge of what really makes us happy in life. Drugs are an incorrect and invalid answer to whatever the reason is that we take them.

Until we reach a higher level of mental capacity and control we need to focus on what hurts us the least. Concurrently we need to continue to improve the mental health of people until we reach the point where the demand for drugs simply disappears. As I said, marijuana is just a baby step in this direction in the sense that it hurts us the least when considering the other available options in the drug world.

Jeff Monsoor
Pompano, Florida

IMPACT:

As an educator, I have seen to many young lives destroyed by the use of pot. It is a gateway to other drugs and kills your potential and ambitions. Most teenagers and adults that smoke pot are trying to cover up their real problems. Get these people to see a good psychologist. Let the normal and clear headed people in this nation vote no.

Brian Diehl

IMPACT:

Enjoyable reading. It is refreshing to read honest and intelligent articles. I am curious as to the motivation behind our federal governments hypocritical stand against marijuana. They say marijuana funds drug cartels. It is their law that causes illegal purchases.

Rather than reaping a multitude of benefits from the legalization of cannabis, they take a beating trying to enforce their law. I look forward to reading more from Impact Press. Thank you so much.

Robert Sutton

Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



...and the Lamb had opened the first of the seven seals, and behold! a white horse. And War sat upon it, and went forth as conqueror to conquer...

If I believed in such things, I'd think maybe the end of the world was coming.

...when he opened the second seal, there went forth a red horse, and to Strife who was sitting on it was given to take peace from the earth, that men should kill one another...

American culture has sunk about as low as it can. There's now an opera based on the Jerry Springer show. It's making the rounds of Fringe Festivals, and is apparently pretty popular.

Meanwhile, Springer has won an award for Worst Show in the History of Television, or something like that. In response, the producers have decided to stop writing lines for the bad actors who portray women who have lesbian affairs with their daughters and the like, and merely have them come onstage and pull up their shirts. (If you question my "actor" remark, you probably think professional wrestling is a "sport.")

Not to be outdone, Fox has combined the reality-show genre, the daytime-talk formula, and the immensely popular "American Idol" format to create "The Harvey Caligula Variety Hour." In it, trailer-trash lesbians will confess their mother-daughter sexual trysts, transsexuals will reveal their true genders to their fiancées, and so on.

After they've heard these sordid stories, the audience will vote by phone; their votes will determine whether the participants will have to marry each other, fight each other with knives in the ring of death, wrestle in a vat of creamed corn, or merely be fed to lions.

...and when he opened the third seal, behold a black horse, upon which Famine rode...

Someone please tell the President how to pronounce "nuclear." I watched the State of the Union Address, and the guy must have said "nuke-you-ler" at least a dozen times. It drove me nuts.

Otherwise, this president's state of the union address wasn't any worse than most. They usually contain about as much real information as a middle-school pep rally, serving mainly as midterm rehearsals for the campaign speeches they'll feed us in another year. TV newscasters like them because they give them a chance to pretend they're journalists.

Anyway, we should insist the President work on his pronunciation. Of course, seeing Bush in action thus far, I worry a little he'll follow the example of Spain's legendary lisping king, in which case nuke-you-ler will become officially correct pronunciation, as will reel-a-tor and jew-ler-ee.

...and when he opened the fourth seal, there came a pale green horse. He who sat upon it was named Death, and Hell followed him. And he was given power over the earth to kill with sword, with hunger, and with disease...

Speaking of the State of the Union Address, I've had an old southern Gospel song stuck in my head. The song, "There is Power in the Blood," was penned by Lewis E. Jones, who wrote it for a "camp meeting" in 1899. It's been a tent-revival favorite ever since.

Bush quoted it in his speech. "There is power—wonder-working power—in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people," he said.

I missed the next few minutes of his speech. In my mind, Bush had broken into song (with Ashcroft singing the bass counterpoint): "There is power (power), power (power), wonder-working power in the blood (in the blood) of the Lamb (of the Lamb). There is power (power), power (power), wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb."

By the time I returned to reality, Pastor Bush had about finished that part of his sermon and was saying something about converting Americans "one soul at a time."

I looked up the text of his speech later, to make sure I hadn't lost my mind. I hadn't—not completely, anyway. The President was talking about his "faith-based" programs:

"Americans are doing the work of compassion every day: visiting prisoners, providing shelter for battered women, bringing companionship to lonely seniors," he said, before mentioning these "good works" should get federal funding. "I urge you to pass both my faith-based initiative and the Citizen Service Act to encourage acts of compassion that can transform America one heart and one soul at a time."

I watched the news commentary about the address. The media seemed to completely overlook the obvious reference to washed-in-the-blood, born-again Christianity. Even now, almost no media type has mentioned it. Perhaps they're all Godless Communists and don't know the song. Or perhaps they've been rendered idi-

otic by the demands of keeping the corporate sponsors happy.

Whatever the case may be, mainstream media seems content to blithely refer to this "faith based initiative," and either too unwilling or too stupid to come out and call it what it is: Religion. And from Bush's choice of hymns, preferably good ol' Christianity.

I have news for the President and his administration. I've met lots and lots of people who volunteer at prisons, women's shelters, and with the aged. I've met others who volunteer in public schools, AIDS support services, and other non-profits; help old and infirm people clean up their yards; build homes for needy families, and serve breakfast in homeless shelters—and they manage to do it without trying to convert anyone "one soul at a time" to their "faith."

One problem with Bush's plan to get federal funding for what essentially amount to church programs—besides the fact that it's fundamentally unconstitutional—is that these secular organizations that provide those services deserve more support, help, and government funding than they're getting, and shouldn't have to compete with churches for it.

I'm sure lots of church programs are led by people that have no motive beyond helping their fellow humans. However, churches have a leg up: If you give money and volunteer hours to a secular organization, about the best they can offer in return is a tax deduction and the chance to feel good about helping your fellow human. If you give money to a church, they can offer you everlasting life in heaven. It's pretty hard to compete with that.

...they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They sit before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple...They shall neither hunger nor thirst any more...God will wipe away every tear from their eyes...

Of course, most people who watched the Address were anxious to hear what the President would say about Iraq. He didn't say much, beyond the usual swaggering, Texas-style saber-rattling.

As of this writing, we still are not at war with Iraq. The Pentagon has admitted we have soldiers there somewhere, but they're not fighting a war. (Of course, Vietnam never became a war. It was merely a "police action" —sort of like giving a small third-world country a parking ticket, only it lasts a hell of a long time and lots of young people on both sides get killed.)

Most Americans assume we're waiting for the rest of the world to get behind the US on the issue, we're giving the weapons inspectors a little more time, or we're waiting for conclusive evidence that Saddam is really a bad guy—not just a regular guy with a bad mustache.

The truth is far more complicated. Wars cost money; in classic grand-ol'-party fashion, this administration has already managed to generate a big deficit. However, during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years Day, a Washington think-tank came up with the answer to the question, "How will we pay for another war?"

Apparently, the idea arose while some White House types were watching a football game. They noticed the community-spirited Rose Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Orange Bowl, etc. had each become some variation on the Big Eight Accounting Firm Bowl, the Usurious Lending Institution Bowl, or whatever. All were played at places that used to be named after cities, ball teams, or famous philanthropists, but kickoffs now happened in Lemon Rent-a-Car Stadium or International Insurance Company Field.

Putting two and two together, amassing funds for a war suddenly seemed childishly simple. Why have another Desert Storm when you could have a Mastercard/Visa Desert Storm, for example?

Now the government is merely busy negotiating sponsorship, licensing, and product placement deals. Pentagon sources won't admit this, of course, but rumor has it Gillette is designing the package for its new line of deodorant, "Desert Guard." However, Gillette will have to outbid Pepsi; another rumor says their marketers think associating Sierra Mist with a war in the desert would be worth billions, if not trillions.

The rumor mill also has Burger King and McDonald's in a bidding war for the right to add their logos to those lawn-dart-sized little antitank bombs that don't explode when they land in soft sand. Apparently, they're popular toys for middle east children. No doubt the commercializing of the war will help prepare Iraqis for their coming liberation by American-style consumerism.

...and the beast shall cause all to have a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, that no one may either buy or sell, unless he has the mark—the name of the beast or the number of its name—and its number is six hundred threescore and six...

I'm sitting at my desk on a lovely, warm winter Saturday in Florida. I should have heard a sonic boom an hour ago as the shuttle flew over on its way to Kennedy Space Center. A pair of cardinals happily call to each other in their high-pitched metallic voices and take turns visiting my bird feeder.

And I'm trying to get a mental grasp on what I think might be the most unimaginable, ironic event I've ever seen. I've not even begun considering the tragedy yet—the likelihood of this is so remote I can hardly believe I'm not dreaming: A space shuttle carrying the first Israeli ever to go into space just broke up over Palestine, Texas.

I can't imagine a darker, more threatening omen. Yet the cardinals still take turns diving down from the branches into the bird feeder as I look out my window, searching the sky for horses.

...the kings who have fornicated and lived wantonly with the whore of Babylon will weep and mourn when they see the smoke of her burning, and cry, Woe! Woe the great city, Babylon! For in one hour has thy judgment come... ❧

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Some of the incidents above are Gospel. Others are Apocryphal. All are satirical. And don't bother running to your Bible to correct me: I took a lot of poetic license with the Book of Revelations.

Conspiracies, Plots and Other Anti-democratic Notions

By Peter Phillips

Paul Wellstone's plane crash wasn't an accident.

The CIA bought stock options on United Airlines before 9-11 making millions in profits. The military sprays low-level bio-weapons on the public through airtanker contrails. The tobacco industry plotted to deceive the public on the negative health effects of smoking. Lee Harvey Oswald alone didn't assassinate John Kennedy. The FBI deliberately caused the fire in the Branch Davidian compound. Planted bombs from within the structure destroyed the federal building in Oklahoma City. AIDS was created in a government research lab. Mass inoculations are designed for citizen mind control. General Motors and Firestone conspired to destroy public transit in the U.S. The Bush White House interfered with FBI investigations into the bin Laden family before 9-11.

Conspiracy theories abound in America and are directly related to the lack of investigative reporting by the mainstream corporate media. The public knows more about Winona Ryder's shop lifting trial than about the weather conditions and circumstances of Paul Wellstone's air crash. The Los Angeles Times printed 83 column feet on OJ Simpson during his trial, but has ignored for decades the deliberate and successful plot before World War II to dismantle LA's public transit system by General Motors and Firestone. Oliver Stone's interpretation of the Kennedy assassination has been mostly dismissed as "conspiracy theory" by corporate media. Questions regarding the veracity or falseness of seemingly important conspiracies and plots often go unreported by mainstream media.

The ten big corporations that now dominate media in America are principally in the entertainment business. While the corporate media is narrowing its content, with news reports often looking very much the same, the public's access to the vastland of the Internet is amplifying, and informational snippets and unanswered questions leading to conspiracy beliefs are increasingly available online.

The First Amendment provides for freedom of the press and was established to protect our democratic process by guaranteeing an informed electorate. Yet we just completed a national election with an all time low voter turn out. Millions of voters refused to participate in the electoral process. We denigrated and blamed non-voters for being uncaring citizens, yet the corporate media has failed to address core issues affecting most people in this country. Voter participation levels are directly related to issues that the citizenry feels are important. Many people no longer trust the corporate media to provide the full truth. This opens people's susceptibilities to believing in conspiracies and plots to explain unanswered questions. Cynicism has deterred voting for many.

How can we free ourselves from this dilemma? First off, we can think of conspiracies as actions by small groups of individuals instead of massive collective plots by governments and corporations. Small groups can be dangerous, especially when the individuals have significant power in huge public and private bureau-

cracies, but they can not possibly be interlinked in a macro way bridging the gaps between thousand of corporations and government bureaucracies. Micro-plots may well be the answer to some of the conspiracies floating in our circles of cynicism.

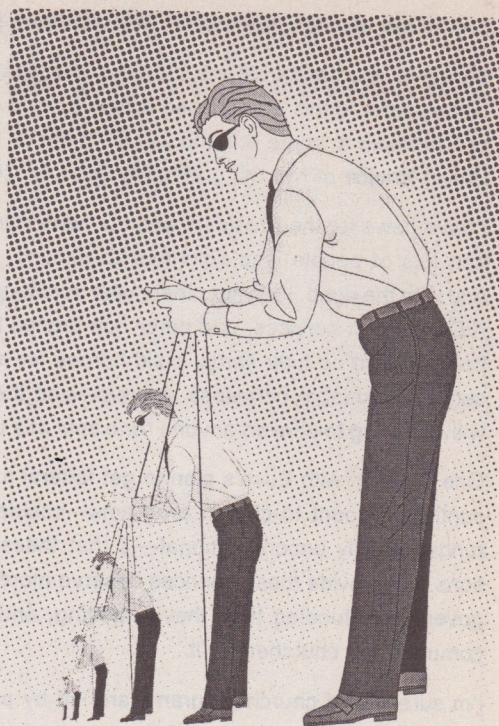
However, without accurate thorough investigations we only stew in our distrust and experience widening alienation from our democratic process.

Additionally, we can advocate strongly for mainstream media to invest in democracy by supporting investigative reporting on key issues. The Director of the Chicago Office of the FBI, Tom Kneir, admitted on August 17 at the American Sociological meetings that the FBI conducted an investigation into the pre-9-11 stock options, but he refused to disclose who bought the stock. Mainstream media needs to pursue this issue using our freedom of information laws to put the conspiracy questions to rest.

Finally, we can advocate for full and clear reporting on the policies and plans emerging from the public and private policy circles of the American corporate and governmental elites. Full analysis and disclosure of the published plans of the Trilateral Commission, The Council on Foreign Relations, The Hoover Institute, The Heritage Foundation, The Cato Institute, The World Bank, and the Project for the New American Century, would go a long way in showing the roadmaps that the policy elites are building for the world. We don't need macro-conspiracy theories to understand that powerful people sit in rooms and plan for global change with private advantage in mind.

If open debate on socio-political policies were offered nationwide it would certainly draw widespread citizen voter participation. Imagine a computer programmer thinking about social policies that would prevent outsourcing of his job to foreign firms. Imagine his enthusiasm voting for representatives that would work to protect his livelihood. Imagine millions of reawakened citizens informed and active in a real democratic process. ■■

Peter Phillips is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Sonoma State University and Director of Project Censored (<http://www.projectcensored.org/>).



art by HOPE

Announcing The P.U.-Litzer Prizes For 2002

For more than a decade now, the P.U.-litzer Prizes have gone to some of America's stinkiest media performances each year. The competition was fierce as ever in 2002. Many journalistic pieces of work deserved recognition. Only a few could be chosen.

While making the selections, I have relied heavily on research by the staff of the media watch group FAIR (where I'm an associate). However, the responsibility for bestowing the latest P.U.-litzers is entirely mine.

Here are the eleventh annual P.U.-litzer Prizes, for the foulest media achievements of 2002:

"KICKING OUT HISTORY" AWARD—Multiple winners

Dozens of esteemed journalists and major media outlets qualified for this prize by reporting that the Iraqi government had ejected U.N. weapons inspectors four years ago. Actually, the inspectors left Iraq in December 1998 under orders from UNSCOM head Richard Butler just before the blitz of U.S. bombing dubbed "Operation Desert Fox."

With notable disregard for historical facts, many reporters at leading news organizations flatly asserted that Saddam Hussein had "expelled" or "kicked out" the U.N. inspectors. Among the purveyors of that misinformation were Daniel Schorr of National Public Radio (Aug. 3), John Diamond of *USA Today* (Aug. 8), John McWethy of "ABC World News Tonight" (Aug. 12), John King of CNN (Aug. 18), John L. Lumpkin of the Associated Press (Sept. 7), Randall Pinkston of "CBS Evening News" (Nov. 9), Betsy Pisik of *The Washington Times* (Nov. 14) and Bob Woodward of *The Washington Post* (Nov. 17).

Some outlets were repeat winners, as when *USA Today* claimed in a Sept. 4 editorial that "Saddam expelled U.N. weapons inspectors in 1998." Other prominent newspapers also made the false information a centerpiece of the positions that they espoused. *The New York Times* declared in an Aug. 3 editorial: "America's goal should be to ensure that Iraq is disarmed of all unconventional weapons. ... To thwart this goal, Baghdad expelled United Nations arms inspectors four years ago." On the very next day, *The Washington Post* editorialized: "Since 1998, when U.N. inspectors were expelled, Iraq has almost certainly been working to build more chemical and biological weapons."

GOLD STANDARD PRIZE—NBC News

Too savvy to go along with the theory that TV news producers are professionals who should edit stories without fear or favor, the decision-makers at "NBC Nightly News" devoted 69 minutes of coverage to the Winter Olympics, which aired in early 2002 on NBC. It just so happened that competing news shows on other networks saw much less news value in the games—"ABC World News Tonight"

gave them 30 minutes, and the total on "CBS Evening News" amounted to 10 minutes.

MEDIA DARWINISM PRIZE—Barry Diller

As a longtime media tycoon now at the top of the Vivendi Universal conglomerate, Barry Diller isn't shy about depicting his success as part of an upward evolutionary spiral. "Media is going to continue its trend of consolidation, which mirrors the ongoing globalization," Diller told the *Los Angeles Times* in March. "This is a natural law. It is inevitable."

FABRICATION-OF-EXONERATION AWARD—Cokie Roberts

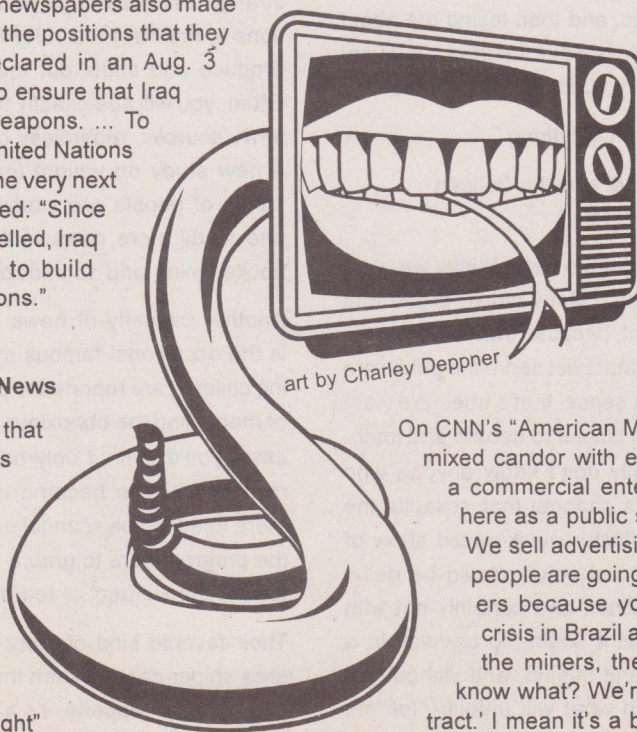
Commenting on George W. Bush's dubious role as a member of the board at Harken Energy, reporter-turned-pundit Cokie Roberts dismissed the idea that Bush might have been involved in corporate malfeasance during his corporate endeavors. "The president was exonerated by the Securities and Exchange Commission, saying he didn't do anything illegal or improper on insider trading charges," she said on July 8. "But the Democrats won't let it go." Roberts did not mention that Bush's lawyers asked the Securities and Exchange Commission for a statement that he had been cleared—and the SEC responded that its initial letter "must in no way be construed as indicating that [Bush] has been exonerated or that no action may ultimately result from the staff's investigation."

SELF-SLANDER PRIZE—Ann Coulter

Coulter is a best-selling author who likes to attack the news media for supposed left-wing bias and irresponsibility. During an August interview with *The New York Observer*, she said: "My only regret with Timothy McVeigh is he did not go to *The New York Times* Building."

SELF-SATISFACTION PRIZE—CNN anchor Jack Cafferty

On CNN's "American Morning" program on Aug. 5, Cafferty mixed candor with exemplary media arrogance: "This is a commercial enterprise. This is not PBS. We're not here as a public service. We're here to make money. We sell advertising, and we do it on the premise that people are going to watch. If you don't cover the miners because you want to do a story about a debt crisis in Brazil at the time everybody else is covering the miners, then Citibank calls up and says, 'You know what? We're not renewing the commercial contract.' I mean it's a business." ◀



The Sky Could Fall At Any Time, Stay Tuned

We have a television in the kitchen at work, all wired up to the holy Dish Network. It has hundreds of channels, more choices than anyone deserves to have. Occasionally, some generation-Y freako will turn on MTV or some thirtysomething will flip over to Lifetime during the lunch hour, but usually it just stays on one of the big news stations: Fox News, CNN, or MSNBC.

When I go into the kitchen for a cup of water, I'm often bombarded by the boisterous, insistent, minor-keyed violin music announcing the coming of a "SHOWDOWN WITH SADDAM" segment on CNN, or a powerful chime on Fox News signaling a "TARGET: IRAQ" focus with all kinds of exciting war graphics and crosshairs in the background. And every time I notice that this is happening, I am happy that I have not yet been fully programmed. To make things worse, these channels will do completely wack things like putting up the "WAR ALERT" graphic, and then telling me about the retirement of fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent. "Is every event in the unfolding of future history suddenly war-related?"

"Mr. President, Yves Saint Laurent is retiring."

"Dear God, man. Get those ICBM's in the bullpen and ready to fly. And may God help us."

It drives one to wonder what it is that cable news thinks we want out of our informational programming. Many would argue that they're giving us *exactly* what we want, because that is the beauty of a free market economy. The ones that best serve the public are the ones that survive the market. In a sense, that's true. We want our world to be an exciting place with issues to debate and loathsome horrors to combat. But I really don't know anyone who wants this kind of video game news channel that assaults the senses and reduces the news to a flashy, quick-paced show of sensationalist technical wizardry. Good news should be delivered in a soft-spoken, objective manner, and certainly not with such sustained powerful ferocity that it begins to cry wolf in a cheesy manner, devoid of respect and impact, and without the baseless speculation by "experts" on what will unfold. Tell me

over-priced musings

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Don Pflaster



what's happening, for godsakes, not what some talking head *thinks* will happen.

The truth is that these channels scarcely care what you want out of your news, they're just competing for a few minutes of your attention, preying on your fears of the terribly awful things that have yet to come. Because news, like the rest of television, does not exist to sell you robust content; it exists to sell you to advertisers. They are the real customers in the television business, and they are getting what they want.

Media has become an oligopoly, ruled by the privileged few. Only six corporations control most of the news: General Electric, Westinghouse/CBS, Viacom, Disney, Time-Warner, and News Corporation/FOX Networks. With so few players in any market, strange alliances begin to form between the powerful organizations to maintain this rule, which homogenizes the products they produce and shuts out the influence of smaller organizations. Often, you will see exactly the same stories repeated on all major news sources, regardless of how significant it might be, such as a new study on weight loss. I'm sure thousands upon thousands of people are studying weight loss, so what makes any one study more newsworthy than any other? A great deal of pocket lining and schmoozing, I suspect.

Another casualty of news homogenization and sensationalism is the occasional famous missing kid. Over half a million missing children are reported to police yearly, but from the point of view of media and the obnoxious amount of coverage given to any one case, you'd think it only happens once or twice. In order for a missing child to become important to the general population, there needs to be scandal or fear in the air, some kind of angle for the programmers to grab a hold of so that we can truly feel rage toward the suspect or fear for our own children.

Their favorite kind of story is the miniseries, such as the D.C.-area sniper case. When that sort of weeks long, continually unfolding story happens, it's a windfall. They can get their graphics

department to make up all kinds of clever opening themes, and they can whip up some scary music to make it the ultimate in reality TV.

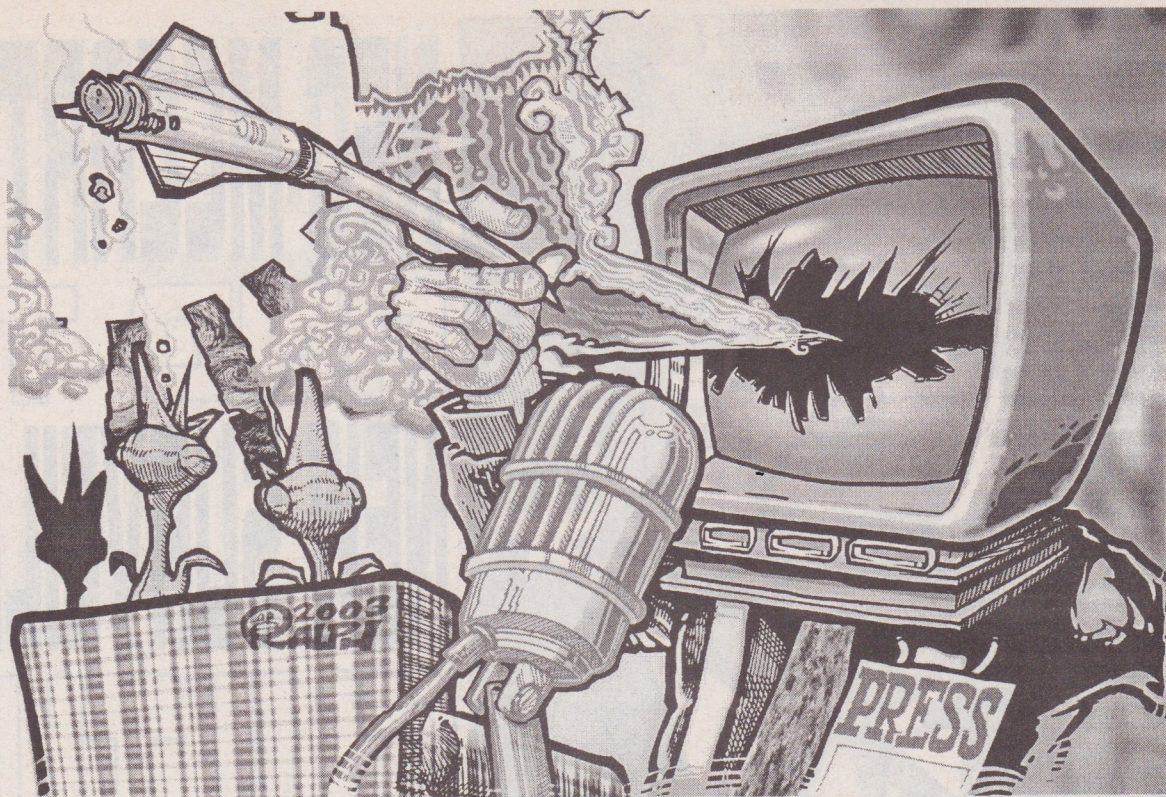
Corporate news mediums create a culture of lies—of issues blown way out of proportion, and issues not blown up nearly enough.

I have discovered, though, that there is one channel among the hundreds that is guaranteed to give you the complete, unadulterated truth at

all times, without a hint of intellectual dishonesty. It is where the noblest efforts at informing the public take place, the nugget of completeness, and the pinnacle of fine broadcasting. It is The Weather Channel.

As for other information needs, we can always turn to the Internet, where we can find the sparse but real sources of honesty, unhindered by corporate interests—a place where a modest budget can reach any mind on the planet (within jurisdictions that aren't filtering content.) Television remains the most powerful means of distributing information, and the most predictable for harvesting audiences, but major media and publishers see this diminishing, and are trying desperately to turn the Internet into a mere jukebox or radio station to keep us hooked on tradition. Yet they are attempting to control the uncontrollable, as doing so has had obvious, drastic economic consequences in recent years.

Hopefully, the grand heterogeneous Internet with its trillions of



websites will crack the shell in this bold new medium to wean the public off the corporate candy that leaves our minds malnourished, and to change forever the flow of information. ❧

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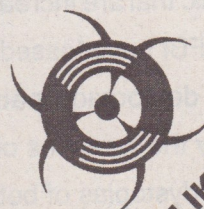
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NEO-MCCARTHYISM AND THE NEW SURVEILLANCE CULTURE

by **DR. STEVEN BEST**

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Ben Franklin (inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty)

WELCOME TO POST-CONSTITUTIONAL AMERICA. While lip service is paid to freedom, basic liberties such as the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and association, the Fourth Amendment right prohibiting illegal search and seizures, and the Sixth Amendment right to a speedy and public trial are increasingly jeopardized. George Bush, John Ashcroft, the Justice Department, and the FBI have tossed the Constitution into the shredder as they perversely redefine concepts such as democracy, patriotism, terrorism, and security. While Americans continue to be entertained by the weapons of mass distraction, the country moves ever more quickly toward tyranny. With the dystopias of both Orwell's *1984* (overt state domination) and Huxley's *Brave New World* (insidious thought control and intense normalization) on the horizon, the gravest threats to freedom today stem not from the Al Qaeda, but rather from our own government.

The State of the Nation

"The State ... is the most flagrant negation, the most cynical and complete negation of humanity." — Anarchist philosopher Michael Bakunin

As defined within anarchist political theory, the state is inherently a system of domination. Historically, the state evolved as a bureaucratic apparatus and power system in its own right, and its goal was to thwart all self-organization among members of society. The state is the usurpation, alienation, and concentration of the power of the community. Surveillance has always been a key function of the state, beginning with the invention of writing. In modern times, Marxists argued that the state is nothing but the ruling political arm of the hegemony of the dominant economic class, the bourgeoisie. Critics point out that the state has a relative autonomy and that the state and capitalist class sometimes are at odds with one another.

That said, it nevertheless is true that the modern democratic state largely is a vehicle to sanctify the profits and property rights of capitalists, and that laws often are but legal expressions of economic power, protecting particular not universal interests. The flip side of state protection of corporate hegemony is the suppression of peoples' interests and their civil liberties. Thus, the realm of law and the domain of justice rarely overlap, and the state uses both legal and paralegal (e.g., force and repression) means of suppression.

Just as the CIA has been nothing but a tool to destroy democracies outside our borders, the mission of the FBI has been to squelch dissent from within. The worse excesses of the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) —whereby from 1956 to 1971 it monitored, infiltrated, and disrupted sundry religious and political organizations—are resurfacing as the intelligence agencies are collecting and sharing data on American citizens. Despite the Church Committee reports (named as such because Senator Frank Church of Idaho headed the committee) of the mid-1970s that documented abuse of power by U.S. intelligence agencies, nothing has changed except that we are losing more liberties.

On few occasions was state power and anti-democratic agendas so evident than during the McCarthy era of the 1950s, when Sen. Joseph McCarthy led a Cold War crusade against First Amendment rights. It is no exaggeration to say that we are entering a neo-McCarthyist period. The terms and players have changed, but the situation is much the same, with the Communist threat being replaced by the Terrorist threat, and John Ashcroft taking the place of Joseph McCarthy. Both then and now, the country demonized a foreign "Other" who threatened the American way of life. Government and media employed simplistic scripts of good and evil, with the U.S. defined as being unambiguously good and the foreign enemy being unqualifiedly evil. Like before, the government identified dangerous enemies everywhere, not only outside our country but also, more menacingly they want us to believe, ensconced within our borders. The attack on the foreign Other allows targeting the Other within, and the domestic Other is any and every citizen expressing dissent.

Origins of the Patriot Act

"I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and to revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army." Henry David Thoreau

According to the U.S. government, the main domestic enemies are not sleeper Al Qaeda cells, but rather animal and earth lib-

eration groups, namely the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC). Because of their many arson attacks, including the spectacular hit on a Vail ski lodge in 1998 (which the government called "the largest act of eco-terrorism in US history"), the FBI has identified the ELF as "the largest and most active U.S.-based terrorist group." According to FBI testimony to Congress in February 2002, the ALF and ELF together committed over 600 "criminal acts" that inflicted over \$43 million in damage to animal industries.

But all three animal and earth liberation organizations are major targets of state suppression as they are officially identified as "domestic terrorist groups." Indeed, not only the state has stigmatized these groups as domestic terrorists, but in the creeping rightward political direction, so too have otherwise progressive groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center, mainstream animal and environmental groups, and much of the mass media. Indeed, even the Humane Society of the United States has come under fire by animal exploitation industries as a "terrorist organization."

After the 9-11 attack, the Bush administration declared a permanent state of emergency against terrorism. With America in a panic, members of the Bush administration quickly went to work to draft new anti-terrorist legislations and on October 26th, less than one month after the attacks, President Bush signed into law the USA Patriot Act.

One of the most important pieces of legislation in American history, this 342-page tome was pushed through Congress before few could even read it, and only a handful of politicians dared to challenge it. Certainly the cleverest of all government acronyms, the USA Patriot Act is short for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act." The designator "Patriot" is painfully ironic, of course, for in the Orwellian doublespeak of the Bush administration patriotism means tyranny and the act aims to dismantle the very freedoms for which true patriots profess to die. Framed as legislation to combat terrorists, the Patriot Act proposes bold new measures to undermine the Constitution. It is a mishmash of provisions to augment state power, with some changes eliminating existing legal loopholes that mitigate government authority, some updating laws for the age of the Internet, and some granting the Justice Department powers previously proscribed by Congress but passed because of the urgency of 9-11. The Patriot Act dissolves the system of checks and balances that supports the Constitution, as the Executive Branch of government seizes control of legislation and the courts. Power is becoming increasingly centralized in the Leviathan of the contemporary state as other branches of the state become rubber stamp mechanisms and alibis for totalitarianism.

The Patriot Act radicalized powers available to the government already on the books from Title 18 of the United States Code, which defines criminal policy including actions against property, people, and the state. In addition, the first institutional threats to animal liberation can be found in the Animal Enterprise Protection Act of 1992. This involved a joint study between the attorney general and the secretary of agriculture on "the extent and effects of domestic and international terrorism on enterprises using animals for food or fiber production, agriculture, research, or testing." This is perhaps the first time the word "terrorist" was applied to the U.S. animal liberation movement, which began in the late 1970s.

Perhaps most importantly, the Patriot Act builds on laws created by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), a secret court created in 1978. The purpose of FISA was to review requests for surveillance on suspected spies, terrorists, and other foreign enemies of the U.S. in order to collect intelligence information. Unlike

other courts, the FISA court did not require probable cause that a crime is being committed to obtain a warrant. Ashcroft tried to argue that the Patriot Act grants the authority to use FISA to conduct a criminal investigation and expand the powers of the executive branch accordingly. This would in effect override the Fourth Amendment that "no warrant shall issue, but upon probable cause." The seven members of the FISA court—which denied only one out of 12,000 surveillance requests over two decades of its existence—unanimously rejected the Patriot Act as an abuse of government authority and denied Ashcroft its approval in August 2002, as it chastised the FBI for misleading them on over 75 occasions. But Ashcroft argued the FISA court exceeded its authority, and an appeals court overturned its decision.

Thus, the Patriot Act shifts the focus of FISA from foreign to domestic intelligence; it thereby targets not only spies and terrorists but also American citizens. By weakening the already permissive nature of FISA and by applying these diminished standards to domestic criminal investigations, the Patriot Act reendows the government with COINTELPRO-like powers to spy, invade, disrupt, and violate constitutionally protected rights. To use FISA secret courts and procedures for domestic investigations, the FBI need only claim that foreign intelligence gathering is a "significant" but not necessarily the "primary" purpose of investigation, that any request it makes is related somehow to its investigation.

Implications of the Patriot Act

"The jaws of power are always open to devour, and her arm is always stretched out, if possible, to destroy the freedom of thinking, speaking, and writing." John Adams

Under the Patriot Act, the government now has the power to violate the rights of activists or political suspects in ways such as the following:

- Demand from bookstores and libraries the names of books anyone purchased or borrowed. Workers at the store or library are thereafter under a firm gag order not to mention the request to anyone such as the media and they have no power to contest it in court.
- Conduct secret surveillance of religious or political groups without the need to show probable cause. This includes clandestine searches of homes and offices in sneak and peak operations.
- Increase wiretapping of phone calls and monitor Internet searches, email correspondence, and chat room discussions. Internet Service Providers may be required to hand over content information and customer records to law officials without a court order or subpoena.
- Have broad access to a person's medical, financial, and educational records.
- Eavesdrop on conversations between lawyers and clients in federal custody.
- Detain foreigners indefinitely without charges or right to counsel.

To do all this surveillance, the Pentagon has initiated the method of "data mining" and the system of "Total Information Awareness" that builds on the infamous FBI Carnivore program for Internet surveillance. This means that the state is monitoring electronic communication and research in order to identify possible "terrorists." All federal agents need to say to the courts, should they ask, is that their prying is relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation. If a judge believes a request is without merit, he or she must grant it anyway. At the same time, citizen rights for disclosure of public

documents and records under the Freedom of Information Act increasingly are being weakened and denied.

The Patriot Act also creates the new legal category of "domestic terrorist" and defines it in a chillingly broad manner. According to the Patriot Act, the crime of domestic terrorism is committed when a person engages in activity "that involves acts dangerous to human life that violate the laws of the U.S. ... and appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population [or] to influence the policy of government by intimidation or coercion."

Clearly "intimidation" and "coercion" could mean anything, and the government does not adequately distinguish between violent and nonviolent methods of persuasion. This definition is a direct challenge to liberation groups like the ALF and ELF that are targeted as top domestic terrorist threats. Indeed, nearly any protest group can fit the definition of terrorists, for what is it to "intimidate" or "coerce" a "civilian population" or "to influence the policy of the government by intimidation or coercion?" Protests often are intimidating, and their entire point is to "influence" policy.

Not only do the ALF and ELF fall under the definition of "domestic terrorism," but also groups like PETA. For "harboring," "concealing," "aiding," or "lending material support to" "terrorists" is punishable under the Patriot Act. PETA has given money to well-known animal rights "terrorists" such as Rod Coronado, Gary Yourofsky, and Josh Harper, and in Ashcroft's world this makes PETA aides and abettors of terror. Indeed, right wing industry organizations like the Center For Consumer Freedom are denouncing even the Humane Society of the United States as a terrorist group for allegedly funding an Internet service used by the ALF and hiring "ALF-affiliated criminal" J.P. Goodwin in 2001.

Similarly, if you shelter dogs that are rescued from a laboratory by the ALF, or if you provided a room for a demonstrator who later became involved in a violent protest activity, you too could be arraigned under the Patriot Act. A foreign student involved with PETA or, certainly, the ALF, could be retained and deported for providing assistance to a "domestic terrorist" organization. Speaking out in support of the ALF or ELF can earn you a criminal charge, as can taking pictures of animal abuse in laboratories or factory farms and slaughterhouses. In our Orwellian culture where truth is falsehood and falsehood is truth, documenting animals tortured in a slaughterhouse is terrorism, but beating and killing animals in unspeakably vicious ways is not.

Amidst the current dragnet, the penalties for liberation activities are far higher than previously. Whereas the crime of arson on a vivisection laboratory, for example, carried a penalty of not more than twenty years, the Patriot Act amends the law to read "for any term of years or for life." The Patriot Act also has removed the statute of limitations for specific terrorist offenses, including those that create a "foreseeable risk" of death or injury to another person. The maximum penalty for providing material support to, harboring, or concealing a "terrorist" increases from ten to fifteen years in prison.

That's When I Reach For My Revolver

"When a long train of abuses and usurpations ... evinces a design to reduce the people under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." Thomas Jefferson

A collective insanity is sweeping the nation no less absurd, outrageous, frightening, and irrational than the Red Scare of the 1950s. The Patriot Act expands government's law enforcement powers

nationwide as it minimizes meaningful review and oversight by an independent judicial body. Rather, the law is reduced to a Soviet-style, rubber-stamp device, compelled to grant an order authorizing surveillance so long as the FBI, CIA, or Justice Department say the magic words: "This surveillance is part of an authorized terrorist or intelligence investigation," or just, "Do it." The Bush world is straight out of the film *Minority Report* where you are guilty until proven innocent, and the government condemns you even for thinking an illegal thought and arrests you before you have a chance to possibly put the thought into action.

Liberation movements are being demonized not just as whacko or extreme, but also as terrorist. Surveillance is increasing in inverse relation to legal accountability and political scrutiny. Even Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) acts and extortion laws developed two decades ago to fight organized crime are now being used against groups like SHAC, with activists being arraigned under such charges in cities like Boston and San Antonio.

Clearly the stakes of the game are higher, and this should prompt new reflection on what direct action tactics are appropriate in the face of these new attacks. Activists should not be afraid or intimidated, but they also need to know their rights, or what is left of them, and everyone needs to exercise particularly high levels of security. Even a tenuous association with the ALF could satisfy the Patriot Act's definition of harboring, concealing, or supporting a "terrorist." It is important that activists have an awareness of the history of state repression, and to know, in particular, how the FBI COINTELPRO infiltrated, raided, disrupted, and destroyed the many groups and causes attacking the government during the 1960s and thereafter. The government may right now be unleashing a similar war against the ALF, ELF, and SHAC, although they will have a much harder time with the ALF and ELF because of their underground, decentralized, cellular level of organization.

The movement needs more lawyers, but it must in the first place strive to avoid long and costly court battles as these drain time, energy, and will, as happened to SHACtivists in San Antonio, Texas when HLS's insurance company, Marsh, fought back with lawsuits claiming harassment. Liberationists must resist being defined as violent and extremists; they must defend themselves rhetorically and philosophically, establishing a sharp distinction between theft, property destruction, and terrorism. They must also work on the philosophical level to challenge the status of animals as property and to define them to be, rather, subjects of a complex life, as are we.

In the current neo-McCarthyist climate, activists need to tone down the rhetoric, so as not to hand the state the rope with which to hang themselves and the movement. The enemy reads our writings and comes to our lectures, recording every word, as is obvious by their use of the infamous Bruce Friedrich soundbite from the national animal rights conference of 2002 that champions property destruction. I am elated to see the "marvelous new militancy" (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) of groups like SHAC, but we must not transgress non-violent boundaries or indulge in antics such as harassing family members of employees working for corporations like HLS. We must avoid even threats to violence, not only to escape the harsher penalties for such speech but also to adhere to the higher moral ground that activists rightly claim. Be intelligent, but do not be afraid; take strength from the courage of King and Gandhi who risked their lives for justice and fought harder when the state repression got worse. Now would be an excellent time to revisit their writings and actions.

We must attack militarism, link this to our general critique of violence, and grasp the connections between militarism abroad and

suppression of dissent at home. We must resolutely defend the Constitution, because fundamental rights are under attack. Unfortunately, the Patriot Act and the damages it has wrought to civil liberties are going to scar our society for a long time to come. There is no guarantee that freedoms lost once will return again, especially if the new global paradigm of heightened dangers and insecurities will prevail indefinitely.

A great sign of hope, however, is that in communities throughout the country, city councils and local governments are passing resolutions against the Patriot Act. From Ithaca, New York to Oakland, California, over two dozen councils have condemned the Patriot Act as anti-constitutional and devoid of moral legitimacy, even if it is the law. Taking more than just symbolic action, cities like Ithaca are requiring city employees (e.g., librarians) to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with the Patriot Act if legitimate government action against terrorism violates the civil rights and liberties of people within their communities. In effect, entire cities are adopting policies of civil disobedience as they pit individual rights and state duties against the federal government. Where Congress has proved cowardly and inept in its duties, city governments are taking on protection of the Constitution as their own responsibility. As one member of the Oakland Civil Rights Defense Committee said, "Congress hasn't been able to check this unconstitutional executive grab, so it is up to us to reclaim our fundamental rights of free speech, free association, due process and equal protection."

Wisely, local communities realize that we must not accept the false dualism the Bush administration and its accomplices are trying to foist on us—either security or liberty. Sewing seeds of mass paranoia about the great Evil lurking everywhere, the Bush administration is dismantling liberties in the name of Homeland Security. Citizens who challenge Bush's efforts to wage war with Iraq are denounced on national media as traitors who should go to jail. According to some critics, Bush and Ashcroft have compromised freedom in ways previous administrations have not, even in times of formally declared war. Just as the war on drugs is a Trojan horse for the entrenchment of state power in our personal lives, the ever-so misnamed Patriot Act is an anti-democratic vehicle of conservative reaction opposing citizen dissent against globalization, corporate destruction of animals and the earth, and a multitude of injustices.

While the nation braces for war with Iraq and additional attacks from Al Qaeda, a key aspect of the terrorist agenda is already realized. If their mission is to destroy the foundations of Western democracy, then, with the help of Bush and Ashcroft, they are succeeding. ❧

Dr. Steven Best is Associate Professor and Chair of Philosophy at the Univ. of Texas, El Paso. He has published numerous books and articles on the topics of social theory, cultural studies, science and technology, and postmodernism. His next book will be Moral Progress and Animal Rights: The Struggle For Human Evolution. Some of his writings are posted at <http://utminers.utep.edu/best/>

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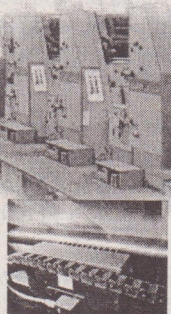


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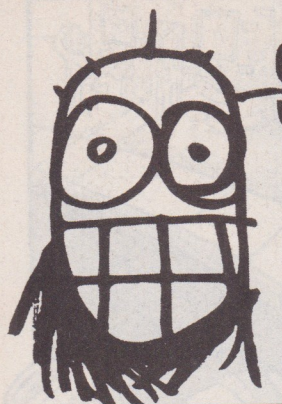
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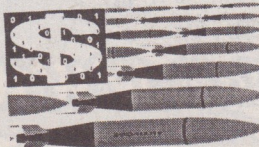
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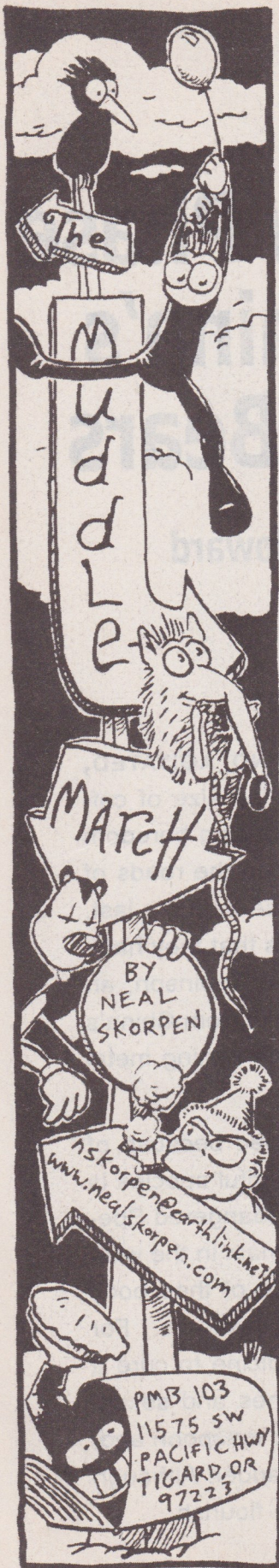
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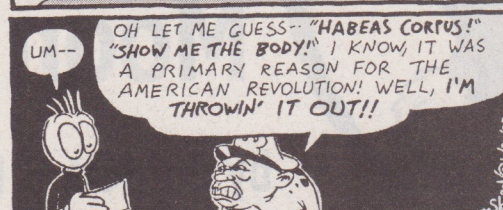
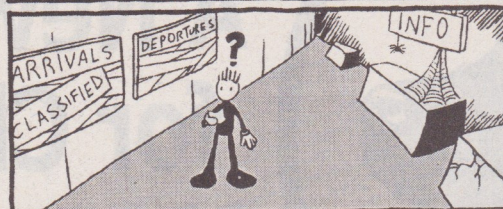
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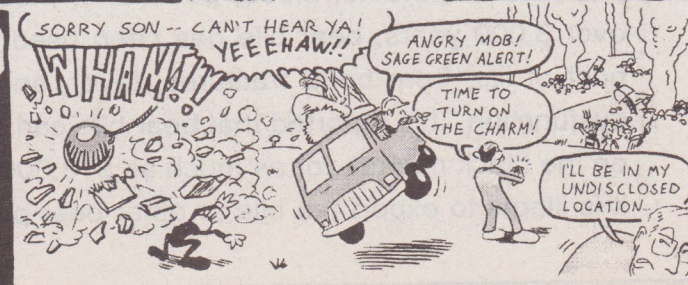
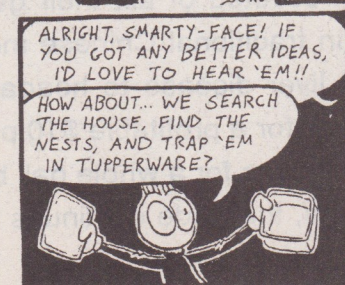
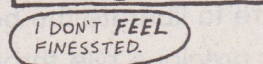
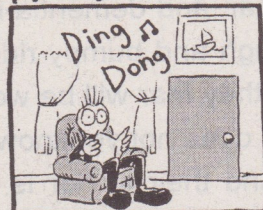
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A New Phase for China's Moon Bears

by Patricia L. Howard

art by Eric Spitler

THEY ARE PULLED OFF THE FLATBED TRUCK, FRIGHTENED AND AGITATED, emaciated, sick, and violently angry, crushed in rusted metal cages the size of coffins. Slow death from infection, agonizing pain, fear, and dementia-inducing boredom have been the sum of their lives. And now, a rough and bumpy ride on the roads of Sichuan Province to Chengdu, to a new fate that they fear will be worse than the last. What this misbegotten lot of Chinese moon bears does not yet know is that they have just arrived at their own peaceable kingdom. And their savior is Jill Robinson, an English rose with steel determination and the desire to liberate the bears from China's bear farms where they are "milked" daily for their precious bile through rusting metal tubes crudely implanted deep in their gall bladders.

Asiatic Black Bear, *Ursus thibetanus*, Chinese Moon Bear. Thus-named because of the yellow-gold crescent-shaped patch of fur on their chests, this beautiful species is listed under Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the most critical category. It is estimated that less than 25,000 remain in the wild, the result of extensive hunting and trapping to fuel the lucrative trade of their body parts—bones, brains, blood, paws and, most coveted of all, their gall bladders. For over 3,000 years, bear bile has been used in traditional Chinese medicine to cure a host of ills, from bone fractures, fever, and liver disease to headaches and sexual dysfunction. It is reported that bear bile can sell for a profitable \$10 per teaspoon and, on the black market, for as much as \$18,000 dollars for a whole gall bladder. Although it is illegal to export the bile or other bear parts, the trade continues to flourish.

In the 1980s, in an effort to protect moon bears from extinction, the Chinese government introduced the practice of bear farming, based on a concept first introduced in Korea, hoping to discourage poaching and trapping. Lucrative for the farmers themselves, this effort quickly proved to be misguided and led to the barbaric conditions Jill Robinson first encountered in 1993 when, as Asia consultant for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), she investigated one of the farms.

"I wandered down a flight of stairs, having no idea what I would discover. To my shock and horror, I saw rows of bears imprisoned in rusting and filthy wire cages so small that they could neither stand nor turn round, and catheters protruding from their stomachs which were obviously infected. The misery in that dark room was overwhelming," she said, explaining that some of the bears had been imprisoned like this for more than 13 years, dying slowly of chronic infection. "As soon as the bears heard me they became agitated and I heard clicking vocalizations that I later learned expressed fear. They were obviously associating a human presence with that painful extraction of bile they were made to endure every day."

One quiet and less agitated bear stretched her paw towards Robinson. Without thinking, she reached out and held it for several moments, feeling the large paw rhythmically squeezing her fingers. "Had I been thinking clearly and known what I now know about bears, I never would have done such a thing," said Robinson, describing the size and strength of the paws as well as the saber-sharp claws. "They can be very aggressive and unpredictable. I truly believe this bear reached out to me for a purpose. It's a moment I will never forget."

Determined to put an end to the intense suffering of these intelligent and inquisitive animals, Robinson began actively campaigning to close down the bear farms, first in her capacity as consultant to IFAW, then establishing the AnimalsAsia Foundation, her own organization and the one that is now at the forefront of the rescue effort. With a recorded 10,000 bears on over 400 farms throughout China, it was a challenge that would have defeated most. Robinson, who had worked with Thames Television in London before moving to Hong Kong to join her commercial-pilot fiancé (now husband), was media savvy. Photos of the bears and the conditions under which they were kept appeared in Chinese and world news media. Most important, she worked unrelentingly to build relationships with government departments to negotiate an end to the farming.

In July 2000, after seven years of intense negotiation, Robinson and the AnimalsAsia Foundation signed a landmark agreement

with The China Wildlife Conservation Association and the Sichuan Forestry Department, sanctioned by the Central Government Department in Beijing, to free 500 Chinese moon bears from the worst of the farms and move towards total elimination of bear farming. An even more momentous achievement for Robinson was that this agreement was the first in history between the Chinese government and an outside animal welfare organization.

But her work was only beginning. The bears would need a viable sanctuary to accommodate their numbers, and expensive veterinary care to undo the physical damage done to them to obtain their valuable bile juices. Bile also had been taken from some of the bears through a newer and presumed more humane "drip method" whereby holes had been opened in their abdomens allowing the bile to continuously ooze to the surface for collection. But both the drip method and primitive catheter method have resulted in deadly peritonitis and septicemia for many of the bears.

The first three bears arrived at Chengdu, the small rescue center constructed by the AnimalsAsia team. Robinson chose Chengdu because the Sichuan province was the location of many of the farms from which the bears would be released to her care. The rescue center, financed only by donations and whatever fund raising the AnimalsAsia Foundation can accomplish, is not nearly as large as it will need to become to accommodate all the bears that will eventually need to be sheltered there.

The bears arrived thin, dehydrated and sick, banging their heads violently against the bars of their claustrophobic cages in a response animal experts call "cage crazy," and lashing out angrily at their rescuers—all but a bear called Andrew, who seemed trusting from the start. Andrew was missing one of his front legs, proving that many moon bears, some only cubs, were still being wild-caught in traps. Embodying the importance of their mission, Andrew won a special place in the hearts of Robinson and rescue center staff. Veterinarian Gail Cochrane tranquilized the bears and prioritized them for surgery. Along with having to remove the corroded seven-inch catheters, she would have to clean agonizingly painful abscesses, remove pounds of fibrotic tissue, and repair abdominal hernias as large as soccer balls. Andrew's surgery alone took five hours.

Later, 60 more bears arrived at Chengdu. The teeth of many of the bears had been cut back to the gums and their fingers amputated so farmers could more easily extract bile without risking injury. One cub, severely mentally disturbed, had been taken from his mother in the wild. Many of the bears had been in their cages for as long as 22 years and some, having grown too large for their cages, were all but fully encased. Worse yet were those like Jasper, who

The teeth of many of the bears had been cut back to the gums and their fingers amputated so farmers could more easily extract bile without risking injury. One cub, severely mentally disturbed, had been taken from his mother in the wild.

for years had lain cruelly crushed to the floor of his cage by a device designed to subdue the bears during milking, but which the farmers often neglected to ever lift again. Many more were found to be missing limbs. None had ever had free access to water—only what they could catch on their tongues during a perfunctory hosing down the farmers had given them once a day. The fruit they were given immediately upon arrival was a delicacy that most of them had never tasted.

Sadly, some of the bears were too weak or filled with infection to survive surgery. And some bears, after seeming to recover, died later of the dreaded septicemia and peritonitis. "Bears are so stoic and terrifically resilient and often show no outward signs that they've developed these infections," Robinson says. "If they are quiet and stop eating for more than 24 hours, we know that we have to put them under to check them out."

Once the most significant health issues are conquered at Chengdu, the bears are started on a physical therapy program, accomplished by tempting them with honey, jam, and other enticing moon bear treats—all placed just far enough out of reach that they have to move and stretch their atrophied muscles. When strong enough, they are given free rein in a larger grassy enclosure, many bears touch grass for the very first time in their lives. As they become accustomed to freedom of movement the bears again become playful, their once matted and filthy coats glossy and luxuriant. And a particular pleasure, Robinson says, is to see them lounging languidly in hanging beds in their specially designed dens, taking advantage of their new-found vertical freedom, a freedom that bears in the wild so enjoy.

Trying not to play favorites among the bears, a few, like Andrew and Jasper, have nonetheless become special to the staff at Chengdu. Another was Mouse, a placid, sweet old gentleman of a bear with swellings on both sides of his head that gave him a rodent-like appearance. "Bears normally eat very quickly," Robinson explains, "but Mouse would eat his beloved mango and digestive biscuits in such a slow and measured way, relishing every morsel." The day that Mouse seemed more quiet than usual, Robinson and Cochrane dreaded the inevitable. While he was under anesthesia, Cochrane found that the swellings were

cancerous tumors. Mouse did not awaken from his surgery. Robinson recalls that even a news-hardened BBC crew, taping a segment on Chengdu for British television, was in tears.

Medical research done in the west has shown that bear bile does indeed have healing properties. The effective compound contained in the bile, ursodeoxycholic acid, or UDCA, may be effective in treating such neurological conditions as Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, and hemorrhagic strokes, says Dr. Clifford Steer, Professor of Medicine, Genetics, and Cell Biology at the University of Minnesota Medical School. UDCA is currently being used in this country to treat chronic liver disease, in the form of tauroursodeoxycholic acid, or TUDCA, which is derived from a source other than bear bile. Steer says, "There is nothing in bear bile that you can't reproduce," and that "[bear farming] sounds disturbing and would not be something I would condone. I feel other options can be considered."

Dr. Martin C. Carey, Professor of Medicine at Harvard University School of Medicine, and an expert on the synthesis of UDCA, says that the use of bear bile is Asia predates chemistry by 1,000 years, pointing out that it was even used in China to make marbled paper. With such a long history and cultural belief in its uses, he is of the opinion that it will be difficult to dissuade many that, for people, the gall bladders of bears are not necessary to maintain optimum health. Carey's opinion of the bear farming industry is that it seems "pretty ghastly."

In spite of a report issued by the Chinese Association of Medicine and Philosophy that details herbal alternatives to treat conditions for which bear bile is often used, it seems that it is a tradition that may be difficult to eliminate, as Carey stated, because of the long-held faith in its efficacy. Even now, bear bile can be found in shampoos and other personal care products, as well as wine and soda.

Traditional Chinese medicine has come under fire for using the parts of many endangered animals in its remedies, such as tiger bone and rhinoceros horn. But through the efforts of Robinson and AnimalAsia, many practitioners in China, England, and Australia have signed a pledge to use only remedies that are derived from sources other than ani-



In spite of a report issued by the Chinese Association of Medicine and Philosophy that details herbal alternatives to treat conditions for which bear bile is often used, it seems that it is a tradition that may be difficult to eliminate, as Carey stated, because of the long-held faith in its efficacy.

mals in treatment of their patients. Dr. Hong Jin, acupuncturist and faculty director of the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine in Portland, Oregon, says that practitioners in the U.S. do not prescribe bear bile. She herself says that she prefers to use plant-based medicines and objects to the treatment of bears on China's farms. Dr. Jin, who received her medical degree from the Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, does say, however, that bear bile may be found in some of the patent medicines (premixed remedies) found on the shelves of some shops in the U.S. that specialize in Chinese medicine.

With no funds supplied by the Chinese government, Robinson relies on charitable donations to raise the vast amounts of money needed to expand the sanctuary to accommodate all of the bears, and to keep up with mounting veterinary expenses. Among the clever and creative ways she has come up with to fund the project is to allow larger donors to name a bear as a premium for their donation. Her favorite is the donor who requested that his bear be named Bottom, so that he could "show all of his friends pictures of his bear Bottom." Nonetheless, it has been difficult to keep up with the tremendous amount of money needed to provide a safe haven for the moon bears. "Too often," she laments, "well-meaning people will hear about our work, and then send money to the larger animal organizations to try to help. But in fact, AnimalsAsia is the only organization actively rescuing these 500 bears."

Robinson, who in 1998 was made a Member of the British Empire in recognition of her work with the AnimalsAsia Foundation, now spends much of her time in Hong Kong to deal with fund raising and the administrative details of the sanctuary, as well as AnimalsAsia's other concerns, such as its "Dr. Dog" program, where dogs make therapeutic visits to patients in hospitals much like the Pets On Wheels programs in the U.S. Hoping to counteract the cruel dog-meat trade in China, Korea, and the Phillippines, Robinson initiated the Dr. Dog program to demonstrate that humans and dogs can have an emotional connection that is beneficial to both species.

Robinson commutes to Chengdu two or three times a month, but leaves the running of the sanctuary in the capable hands of project director Boris Chiao, sanctuary manager Bob Deng, and a small staff, including a full-time veterinary nurse. "We have a fabulous team," she says of Cochrane and her other colleagues. "We've stuck with each other for years. This is no place for egos—we just get on with the job and love it."

As of October 2002, 31 farms have been closed by the govern-

ment, and no new bear farming licenses have been issued since 1994. So far Chengdu has received 75 confiscated bears, many of whom are now ready for the larger "bamboo forest" enclosure that has been designed for them to better approximate their natural habitat. But progress is not as rapid as Robinson and other bear advocates would like. And they are a long way from receiving the total 500 bears they expect.

Because there is no official government policy on closing the farms, and they are moving at such a cautious pace, she fears that officials who would prefer to see bear farming continue may begin to make themselves heard. In addition to China's bear farms, she says, there are as many as 5,000 bears being farmed in Vietnam, and 1,400 bears languishing on defunct farms in Korea.

The 2008 Olympic Games will be held in Beijing. Robinson and AnimalsAsia are working hard to see that bear farming is ended by that time—a time when China will have much of which to be proud to show the world and, she hopes, nothing of which to be ashamed. ❧

Patricia Howard is a freelance writer and actor living in the Washington, DC, area. She is the former associate editor of Sea Power Magazine, and writes on medical, science, cultural, and animal topics.

M a k e a n I M P A C T

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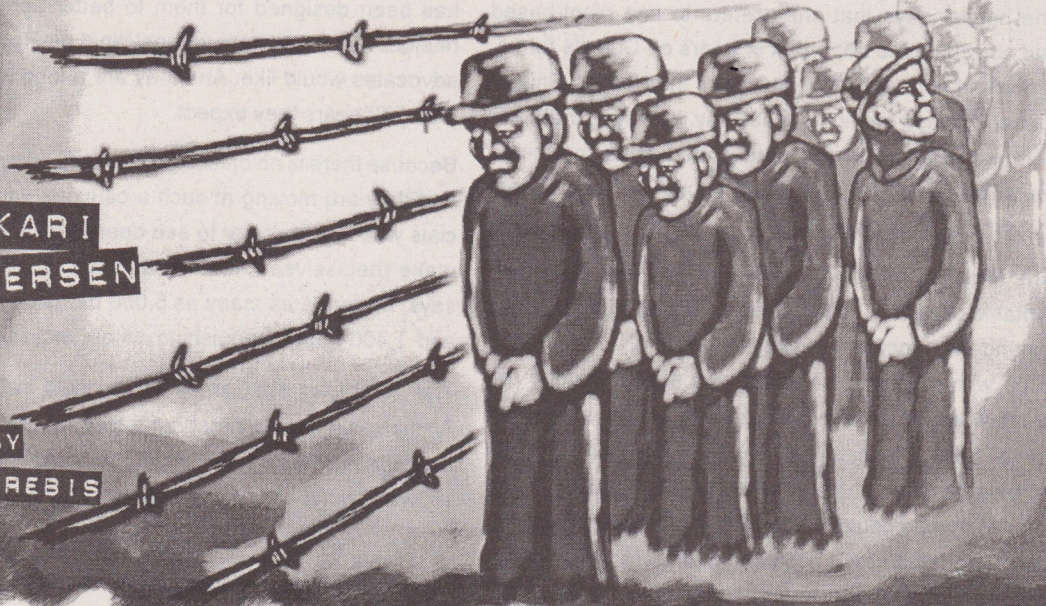
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"WHAT NEXT, CONCENTRATION CAMPS?"

RACIAL PROFILING IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

BY KARI
LYDERSEN

ART BY
GREG REBIS



AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN AND WOMEN have bitterly joked about the "DWB" phenomenon for decades—the fact that at any time they are subject to being pulled over for the crime of Driving While Black.

It has only been in the past couple of years that the issue became recognized as a problem by police departments and politicians, resulting in money shelled out in civil rights lawsuits as well as sensitivity training and public relations campaigns by police departments across the country. In January 2003, the Maryland State Police settled a federal class action suit filed by the ACLU that had been going on for 10 years, agreeing to sweeping changes to prevent the profiling of minority motorists.

But just as the government is finally able to admit that it is wrong to arrest people for DWB, it seems a new crime has been invented as part of the War on Terrorism. Call it EWA or just EWI. Existing While Arab, or more generally Existing While Immigrant.

With the war on terrorism giving President Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft carte blanche to do almost anything they want, civil liberties and rights have been stripped away from the American public as a whole, and in particular, Arab-Americans and immigrants—even legal residents. As part of this campaign, the previously dirty words “racial profiling” are now considered legal policy and a valid strategy to fight terror. People can be searched, questioned, spied on, even detained without a lawyer on the basis of their race or religion alone. A Gallup poll taken shortly after the 9/11 attacks found that 60 percent of Americans supported racial profiling of Arabs at airports, and the Federal Motor Carrier Administration, which inspects trucks carrying hazardous materials, announced it would start searching Arab-looking drivers based on their race.

This despite the fact that experts on both the right and the left say that not only is racial profiling morally questionable, it is a completely inefficient and ineffective plan. They point out that the government is no more likely to catch a would-be terrorist by searching every Arab and immigrant than it is to find an armed robber by pulling over every Black driver.

“It’s not just a bad thing, it’s ineffective,” said Ed Yohnka, Director of Communications for the ACLU of Illinois. “It’s distracting from the real work that police ought to be doing. And it divides communities—the divisions created post-9/11 between Muslim and Southeast Asian communities and the police are very disturbing. It creates a kind of fear and anxiety in communities that doesn’t serve any of us very well.”

Generating Fear

Yohnka is currently working on two cases involving profiling of African Americans—one in which three African American high school students were searched and interrogated about drugs while driving to a game with their white coach, for no reason other than their race. He says the profiling of Arabs is no less onerous.

As with the war on drugs and crime, much of the public has been

“People are more willing to support the notion of profiling Arabs and Muslims than they were pre-9/11,” said Ed Yohnka with the ACLU. “They’re more willing to support that than the profiling of African Americans or Latinos. It’s demonstrative of a certain kind of fear, a fear that the government often creates.”

convinced to accept racial profiling through scare tactics.

“People are more willing to support the notion of profiling Arabs and Muslims than they were pre-9/11,” said Yohnka. “They’re more willing to support that than the profiling of African Americans or Latinos. It’s demonstrative of a certain kind of fear, a fear that the government often creates.”

Proponents of increased surveillance and restricted liberties rightly point out that terrorism is a very real threat to the U.S. at this point in time, and therefore some extraordinary means are necessary.

Robert Levy, a senior fellow in constitutional studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, says that racial profiling in the war on terrorism is a tactic that should be considered, but carefully.

“I try to draw a distinction between criminal profiling by race and terrorist profiling by nationality,” he said. “I think you can support terrorist profiling more easily than criminal profiling. The things you need to look at are three-fold: what is the potential benefit if profiling works, what is the imposition on innocent people and what is the potential for abuse?”

He said that in order for racial profiling to be considered logical, it would have to pass a cost-benefit analysis. The costs, meaning harm to innocent people, would have to be outweighed by the benefits, meaning the legitimate chances of apprehending a would-be terrorist. He doesn’t think that a case can be made with regard to the war on terrorism—so far the massive detentions and sweeps ordered by Ashcroft have failed to produce a single terrorism-related arrest.

And Levy’s colleague at the Cato Institute, Ted Galen Carpenter, notes that civil liberties infringements like racial profiling are even

more troubling in the war on terrorism than in other conflicts since this promises to be an extremely long-term or even permanent “war.”

“It depends on the conditions, and also the extent of the imposition,” said Levy. “If it’s to impose on parties who may be potentially innocent but the nature of the

A Gallup poll taken shortly after the 9/11 attacks found that 60 percent of Americans supported racial profiling of Arabs at airports, and the Federal Motor Carrier Administration, which inspects trucks carrying hazardous materials, announced it would start searching Arab-looking drivers based on their race.

imposition is minimal, it's easier to take. I consider airport searches minimal—the damages are not that great when you're talking about having to take your shoe off. But if the extent of the imposition is more serious like detentions and incarcerations, I think it's entirely unjustified."

"This demonizing is part of the war campaign, to justify intervention in Iraq and future wars to come," said Journalist Roger Calero, 32, who continues to reside in New York until his immigration hearing on March 25. "The U.S. has a long history of this."

"Unfair Treatment and Unkind Words"

Nine days after the September 11 attacks, President Bush said that, "No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith." But his administration went full force into doing just this, and more, as did average citizens.

Racial profiling kicked in almost immediately after 9/11, first in the unofficial realm of discrimination, verbal insults and threats and hate crimes, then in official government policy. Average citizens carried out their own form of vigilante racial profiling in the wake of the attacks, with at least six Arab Americans or Southeast Asians murdered around the country because of their ethnicity and countless hate-related assaults and acts of vandalism committed.

In Chicago alone, for example, 55 hate crimes were reported in which the attacks were mentioned and at least once an angry mob descended on a mosque. Mustapha Zemkour, a Chicago-area taxi driver, was beaten as his assailants yelled, "This is what you get, you mass murderer." The U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights division has opened 403 federal investigations of anti-Arab hate crimes. Employment discrimination has also been common—the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission logged 671 complaints of anti-Arab related discrimination as of October 2002.

In November 2001, Ashcroft steam-rolled over public opinion and Congressional opposition to institute a dragnet policy wherein 5,000 men of Arab descent were detained and questioned. This despite the fact he was advised against racial profiling by a panel of law enforcement specialists, as revealed in the internal memo "Assessing Behaviors" published in *The Boston Globe* ("Memo warns against use of profiling as defense", 10/12/2001).

Some of the men ended up being held for months with no evi-

dence of wrongdoing before finally being released; others ended up being deported or detained indefinitely on minor visa violations. Many police departments around the country refused to participate in the dragnet, which did not end up yielding a single terrorism-related suspect and only about 20 visa violation charges. Nonetheless Ashcroft instituted a second dragnet of 3,000 non-immigrant men.

A resolution passed six days after the attacks allows them to be held for 48 hours without charges, or longer in "emergency situations." Amnesty International has released a report detailing abuses and poor conditions these detainees have suffered, including solitary confinement and torture by guards in general population jails.

In June 2002, Ashcroft ordered the registration and fingerprinting of all legal visitors and immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia upon arrival in the U.S.

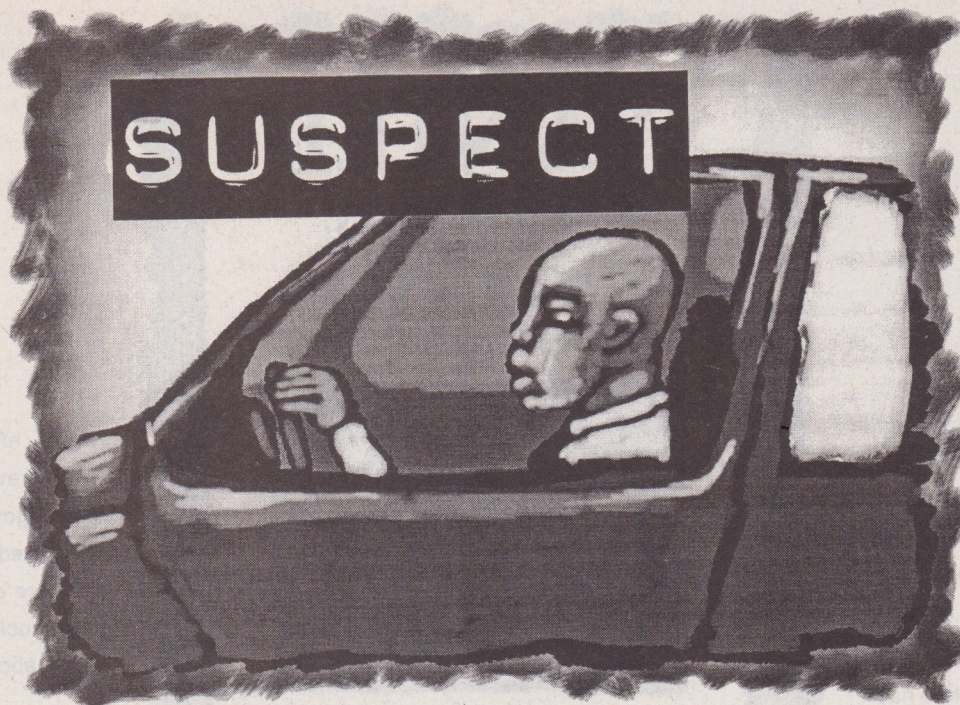
From December 2002 through February 2003, all men over age 16 from a list of Muslim countries and North Korea were required to register with the government, be fingerprinted and report any change in address, schooling or employment. Those who failed to register can be deported, even if they are legal residents, while many of those who did register were immediately arrested and interrogated for minor visa problems or just general "suspiciousness."

"Essentially the U.S. government has made sweeping and blanket accusations against people from foreign countries who the U.S. has foreign policy issues with," said Hatem Abudayyeh, a Palestinian activist and director of the Arab American Action Network in Chicago. "That's a blatant case of racial profiling."

In southern California, up to 1,000 men who reported for the December 16 registration deadline were detained, the majority of them Iranians, according to the National Immigration Forum. In

L.A., up to one fourth of those who reported for registration were put in deportation proceedings, even if they had been in the process of adjusting their immigration status. Abudayyeh noted that the focus on Iranians was especially illogical because rather than being supporters of the

"Some people are saying that this was meant to be a clear message to Iranians here that if you even think about uniting with Iraq, you'll be attacked," he said. "Whether it's militarily attacked in the Gulf or through repression here."



Iranian government, most long-time Iranian immigrants came here because they didn't support the government that took power in Iran after the 1989 Islamic revolution.

"These people have nothing to do with terrorism," said pro bono attorney Soheila Jonoubi. "They are all in the country legally. They have been singled out according to gender, ethnicity and religion. I have 16-year-old kids being pulled out of their mothers' arms crying and taken to jail."

The registrations took place with three different deadlines for different groups of countries. The first two groups included men from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Yemen, Sudan and other countries. Saudi Arabia wasn't even included on the original list; now Saudis must register by a February 21 deadline.

"You don't even include people from the country where the majority of the hijackers came from," said Yohnka, before the later Saudi Arabia deadline was announced. "It makes you wonder how effective this thing could really be."

Abudayyeh sees both the original exclusion of U.S. ally Saudi Arabia from the list and the focus on Iranians as evidence of ulterior political motives. He thinks the focus on Iran, which Bush described as part of the "Axis of Evil," could be related to the coming war with Iraq.

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"Operation Tarmac"

Selective enforcement is also evident in the Aviation and Transportation Security Act and Operation Tarmac, which mandated that only citizens can work as security screeners at airports. Thousands of hardworking, low-wage immigrants around the country lost their jobs because of the act; so did citizens with even minor drug or other criminal convictions. But pilots, mechanics and other positions with more sensitive access to planes, while subjected to background checks, are not required to be citizens.

In December 2002, airports around the country arrested workers with non-matching social security numbers—undocumented immigrants who had often been at their jobs for years, mainly in such low security-risk jobs as janitors and delivery drivers. In Chicago, federal agents went to workers' homes to arrest them, in front of terrified spouses and children. Alejandro Alvarado Huerta was one of 44 arrested and placed in deportation proceedings, despite the fact that he has lived in the U.S. for 10 years, has two citizen children and owns a home.

"It's a big political show," Josh Hoyt, executive director of the Illinois Coalition on Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), told a Spanish TV news anchor. "They're trying to show people that during the holidays the government is working for national security."

Profiling and scapegoating of immigrants has also been stepped up in accordance with the draconian 1996 immigration reform laws. Journalist Roger Calero, a native of Nicaragua who has lived in the U.S. for 17 years, got first-hand experience with this while

returning from an assignment in Mexico on December 3rd. Calero was detained by customs at the Houston airport and placed into deportation proceedings because of a minor 1988 drug conviction when he was in high school. Calero has been a legal permanent resident since 1990 and specifically detailed his conviction in both his initial residency application and his 2000 renewal. While he was granted residency both times despite the charge, now the government deems it grounds to deport him.

"This demonizing is part of the war campaign, to justify intervention in Iraq and future wars to come," said Calero, 32, who continues to reside in New York until his immigration hearing on March 25. "The U.S. has a long history of this. Immigration policies have a long history of being racist—you look at how they treat Haitian and African immigrants [versus European immigrants]. Whole sections of people are portrayed as criminals, terrorists."

An Attack on All Communities of Color

People have also regularly been prohibited from flying at all because of their race. In June 2002, the Northern California ACLU and the law firm Relman & Associates filed a lawsuit against four airlines on behalf of the Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and five men who were not allowed to fly because passengers or airline staff didn't like their appearance.

Racial profiling by citizens and the government in the war on terror has already had countless troubling outcomes, such as the arrest of three medical students on their way to school in Florida after a waitress reported they were planning a terrorist attack. A huge



search effort yielded not a shred of evidence of any plan, and the government eventually apologized to the men, but they still were expelled from medical school for their supposed joking about September 11th.

Incidents like this will only increase with the institution of things like the Terrorist Information and Prevention System (TIPS) program, which aimed to enlist employees like postal workers, deliverymen and meter read-

ers in reporting on the personal lives and activities of their customers. The program was derailed thanks to outrage from the postal service, Congress and other agencies, but the general push to involve civilians in intelligence gathering continues.

A report from ICIRR notes that shortly after September 11th, the FBI visited the home of Arab American Family Services co-director Itedal Shalabi on an anonymous tip that her son could be involved in terrorist activities. Her son is only nine years old.

"What would have happened if he was 16 or 17?" she asked. "That's the scary part."

Immigrants are also encouraged to report on each other with rewards of visas. Ashcroft ordered that 250 visas be allotted as rewards for immigrants providing information on terrorist activity, offering a tempting incentive for false and trumped up tips.

Ashcroft has also pushed for police to take on more investigative and immigration-related powers. Many police departments, especially in urban areas, have refused to be part of immigration proceedings.

"In order for state and local law enforcement to be effective partners with their communities, it is imperative that they not be placed

in the role of detaining and arresting individuals based solely on a change in their immigration status," said a letter from the California Police Chief's leadership to Ashcroft.

But other departments, especially in rural areas and small towns with high immigrant worker populations, have been all too eager to expand their reach.

"That's affecting a lot of Latinos as well as Arab Americans," said Rhoda Rae Gutierrez, spokesperson for the ICIRR. "Cops are carrying out INS duties even without being deputized to do that. It's happening in rural areas consistently, like they've gotten a free pass since 9/11 to racial profile in the name of national security."

Gutierrez noted that in places like the small resort town of Galena, Illinois, racial profiling traffic stops could have a devastating effect on whole communities. There, police have started regularly stopping undocumented immigrants on their way to work at the local resorts and asking to see their papers. Because undocumented immigrants can't legally get drivers' licenses, they risk having their cars impounded. Since all the workers live outside of the resort area, that means that if they do avoid deportation proceedings, they still won't be able to get to work.

"If there is a routine traffic stop, people don't know if they will check their papers," said Abudayyeh. "That affects Mexicans and other Latinos as well [as Arabs]. And African Americans have historically

been targets of racial profiling and will continue to be. This is an attack on all communities of color." ❧

Kari Lydersen is a journalist based in Chicago and an instructor for the Urban Youth International Journalism Program. She writes for *In These Times*, *Punk Planet*, *Clamor* and *LiP* magazine, among others.

Make an IMPACT

National Immigration Forum

<http://www.immigrationforum.org/>

Illinois Coalition on Immigrant and Refugee Rights

<http://www.icirr.org>

Palestine Solidarity Group

<http://www.palsolidaritygrp.org>

American Immigration Lawyers' Association

<http://www.aila.org>

American Civil Liberties Union

<http://www.aclu.org>

Cato Institute

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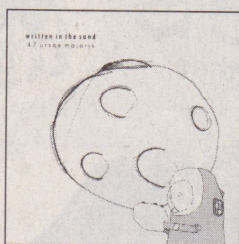
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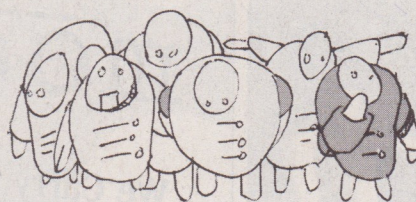
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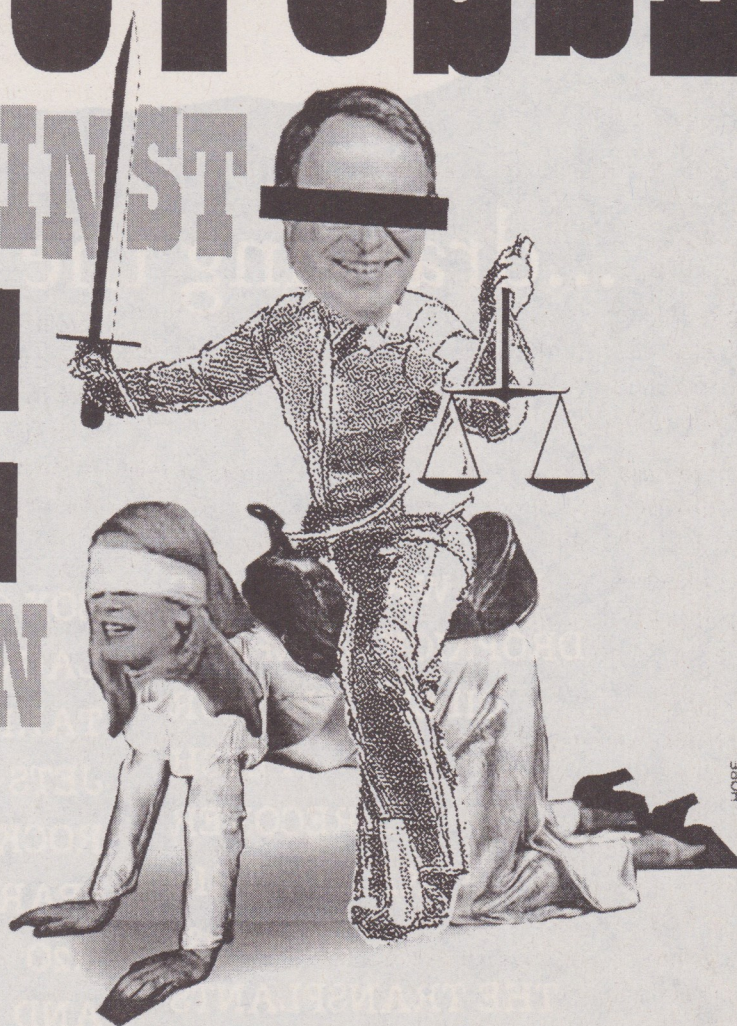
PORNO POSSE

RIDES AGAINST

FREE

EXPRESSION

by Morris Sullivan



HOPE

THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS YOU CAN DO IN POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA.

To an outsider, the villages and burgeoning metropolises that make up the county—towns with names like Lake Wales, Frostproof, Polk City, and Lakeland—have little to distinguish them. "Not too far from Orlando" and "about halfway between Disney and Busch Gardens" are the big selling points Polk County Realtors use to describe the area.

During the pre-Disney years, "attractions" opened in some of these places, hoping to waylay tourists headed from the Midwest to Miami and siphon a few tourist dollars into early Florida theme parks like Cypress Gardens. A few of these now-second-string tourist traps—Fantasy of Flight, for example, and the "singing tower" at Bok Gardens—still manage to survive. Some of Polk's little towns even managed to avoid being gobbled up by the Orlando-to-Tampa megalopolis spawned by Disney's arrival and preserve pockets of quaintness, keeping their historic Main Street areas intact.

But there is at least one thing you can't do in Polk County: You can't rent a porn flick.

Nowhere in Polk County can one rent or buy a copy of *Jungle Juice*, for example, or *Shaved and Depraved*, *As Kinky as it Gets*, or *Grandmas in Heat*. Nor can you purchase a magazine much more explicit than *Playboy*, or stop on the way home from work to pick up a dildo for your sweetheart. There isn't a single "adult" bookstore, video shop, strip joint, or other adult enterprise in the whole damn county. And Polk County law enforcement plans to keep it that way, even if it means ignoring the first amendment.

If you have balls enough to set up an adult business in Polk County, the local porn posse—Sheriff's Colonel Grady Judd, State Attorney Jerry Hill, and their prosecutor/sidekick Brad Copley—will shut you down. Not only will the Judd Gang make you close up shop, they'll run you out of town. To make doubly sure they get rid of the problem you created, they'll salt the earth behind you, so no "smut" will ever grow on the land you leave behind.

That may soon change, however—Orlando civil rights attorneys Steven G. Mason and H. Franklin Robbins, Jr. have called the Judd Gang out for a showdown. Their client, Greg Burris, owns several small video stores that each carry a handful of adult films along with a predictable inventory of Hollywood mainstays and mainstream best sellers. With Mason and Robbins representing him, Burris has filed suit against Polk County, alleging the Judd boys' run-'em-out-of-town tactics violate first amendment freedoms.

During a hearing held in early January, Mason argued that the county's use of the obscenity statute in conjunction with RICO (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) penalties creates a chilling effect on free speech. If his argument prevails, the court's decision could stop crusaders like Judd, Hill,

and Copley from tromping over business owners.

A decision in Polk County's favor, however, could open the door for every Bible-thumping prosecutor in America to ride roughshod right over the first amendment.

In 1999, Burris opened a video store in Lakeland, one of "a dozen or so" he has opened in Florida and Georgia over the past 13 years. Most of the fixtures and some of the inventory in his stores came from defunct mom'n pop video shops.

"It used to be there wasn't a strip center anywhere that didn't have a little video store," Burris explains. Then the big boys—Blockbuster, Hollywood, and the like—came along, and started putting all the little shops out of business, he says. "They dominate the Top 40 business, and you can't compete with them. The ones that survived were those with a little [adults only] room in the back. Those can survive and do quite well."

There was a small room in the back of Burris' Lakeland store. "It used to be a utility closet," he says. "I was going to set that up as an adult room, with 250 to 300 titles, max." In the meantime, the store's mainstay inventory included around 2,000 titles, so the adult business would amount to no more than 15 percent of the total inventory, and a considerably smaller percentage of floor space.

That little room in the back, Burris explains, would produce the profits that would keep the store alive. "You really make more profit on the adult titles," he says. "Most of the sales and rentals are from the conventional tapes, but the profit margin [on adult tapes] is much higher." Not only do they rent over and over and for a longer time, but adult films are much less expensive than the big-renting Hollywood stuff. "The top 40 titles are very expensive," he says. "You have to rent them a lot just to break even; then they stop renting altogether, and you can't get much on resale."

Most municipalities put limitations on the amount of space, inventory, or dollar volume that a business devotes to or derives from adult video or book sales, mainly for business licensing purposes. To make sure he stayed under the wire, Burris looked at the county codes relative to adult video sales.

"I had heard they had arrested and charged people with obscenity there," he says. "I assumed these were adult places, topless bars, full adult stores, and that sort of thing." However, he soon found out otherwise. While Burris was setting up his store, Polk County sheriffs arrested the owners of a nearby shop. "It was around the corner from mine, and a little bigger. It operated like I was planning to, with a little adult room off the side."

Before unpacking the adult tapes, Burris called Robbins, asking him to look into the arrests. The lawyer noticed a pattern: anyone in the entire county who had carried adult videos had been arrested for obscene materials. However, the persecution didn't stop there.

"What they do in Polk County is very sophisticated," Mason explains. "Florida is one of 18 states that allows obscenity, which is a misdemeanor, to be used as a basis to establish a pattern of gangster activity." With the RICO statute in hand, Judd and company send someone to a store to buy a couple of videotapes, then take them to a judge to have them deemed obscene. Taken on its own, the charge would carry a \$1000 fine, with a possibility of up to one year's supervised probation and/or jail time.

However, Mason says, under Florida's RICO statute, those two dirty little misdemeanors can be built into a much bigger threat. The state has the toughest RICO penalties in the US—up to 30 years per count. "So they take those two misdemeanors and parley them into two RICO charges, one for gangster activity, and one for conspiracy," he says. "So they get you once for doing it, and once for thinking about doing it, for a potential 60 years of prison time."

"Then they offer you a deal," he says. The county will drop all charges if the "gangster" agrees to get out of Dodge. "It's not enough to agree to stop selling the videos," he says. "They get you to close up shop and move out of town. And if you own the property, they make you put a deed restriction on it so no one else can open an adult business there."

So far, the tactic has proved highly effective. Most owners have chosen to roll over rather than risk 60 years in the pokey over *Hot Asian Pie* and *Lesbian Fever*. In the past dozen or so years, Polk County has closed every "adult" business within its borders, including the little shop around the corner from Burris' store.

Another, the Varsity adult bookstore, negotiated a deal with prosecutors to avoid prosecution for racketeering by closing up shop and putting a deed restriction on the property barring adult uses. The deal forbids the owners from operating any sexually related business within the 10th Judicial Circuit, which includes not only Polk, but Hardee and Highlands counties.

"We've closed everything from triple-X theaters to lingerie shops to peep shows," Judd said in an interview with the *Lakeland Ledger* last June. When Varsity closed, Judd estimated the total cleanup had included around 120 businesses. He told the *Ledger*, "We anticipate [Varsity's owner] will fully comply with the agreement. If he doesn't, we will come back and file additional charges."

Confronted with such legal strong-arming, Burris says, "I thought, this is insane! No way these tapes are obscene!" The titles mentioned above, along with others like *Old Ass Action*, *Gaping Holes*, and *Sex in Public Places* have all been deemed "obscene" by Polk's porn posse. Salaciously silly as they might sound, Burris said, they're pretty tame by contemporary adult film standards.

"These are tapes you'd find in any store in America that carries adult titles," he says. "But [Robbins] said, 'You can take it to court, go all the way to the end, and hopefully prove they're not obscene."

Of course, you're gambling with 60 years of your life."

Obscenity charges, Mason says, are generally vague. "There's this multi-part equation, where they talk about the average man, applying contemporary standards, would say the work as a whole has no social or scientific redeeming value, and is patently offensive," he says. "Community standards" also come into play: whether the material is tolerated by the community and whether it "appeals to the so-called prurient interest, which the Supreme Court defines as 'morbid or shameful interest in sex,'" Mason says. "So good, ol' fashioned lust is acceptable and not obscene."

"It's crazy and unworkable," he adds. "I'd say it's almost impossible to look at a videotape and say it is or isn't obscene. And used in conjunction with RICO, and in such a vicious, political manner," he adds, "the unconstitutionality is self evident."

Like other Polk business owners accused of "gangster activity," Burris was reluctant to roll the dice with stakes so high. "If it was a year, I might let them come in and arrest me, then try to prove they're not obscene," he says. However, he'd think twice about "going in front of a jury with two Disney movies to gamble on 60 years of my life."

Unlike the others, however, Burris had lawyer Robbins on retainer, who partners on first amendment cases with Mason, an aggressive and tenacious civil rights advocate. "If I had to pay hourly for this, I might throw in the towel," Burris says. The Judd Gang, he suggests, counts on their victims rolling over rather than spending the money it would take to put up a fight.

"But now we're doing it, just on principle," he says. The RICO statutes "were put on the books to stop organized crime back in the Al Capone days. This is a totally different ball game, and that fear tactic needs to be taken away."

Allowing this kind of intimidation to continue "means every time you get some psycho state attorney who decides in his personal view that he wants to get rid of everything he doesn't like, he can do it, just like this," Burris says. "Then what? It'll end up like Nazi Germany, unless you stop it now."

The adult film industry is a legitimate one, and storeowners should be able to trust the tapes aren't obscene. "If they were, most of the people in our society are obscene," he says. Varsity, for example, had 25,000 members. "If it really went so far beyond community standards, you wouldn't have that—you'd have five weirdoes," Burris says.

"I even mentioned this to my wife's gynecologist," who told Burris she recommends adult tapes to women who have had children and are having trouble "feeling sexual" again. "They trigger something in their mind that gets them back on track," he says.

However, Judd and company don't have to worry about whether or not an item would actually be found obscene in court. During

the January trial, Mason told presiding judge James D. Whittemore, "every single tape that has sexually explicit material on it is targeted as obscene...They will use that [RICO] vehicle to coerce and scare and frighten people into leaving town and never selling any material. And therefore, there will never be a determination of what is Constitutional and what is not Constitutional, because they have this broad net that just chills free speech."

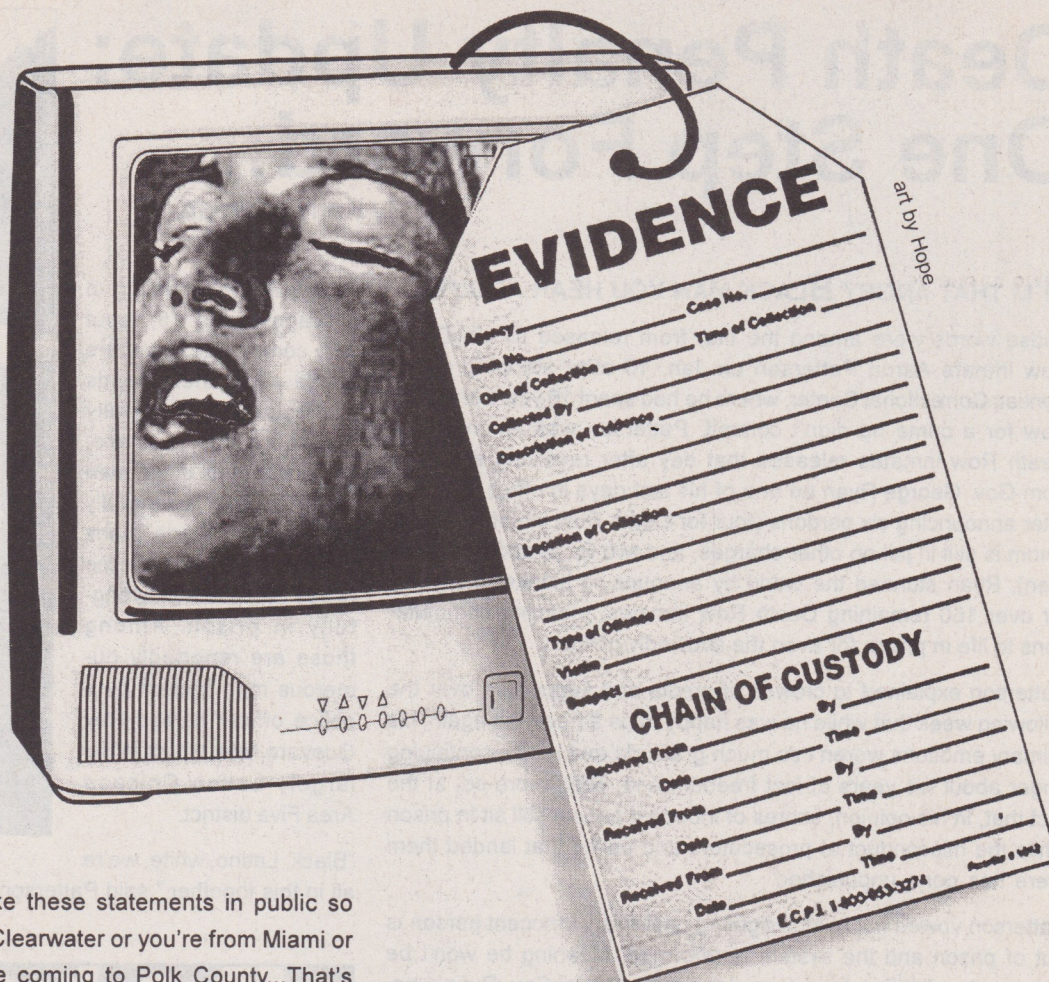
"If it was only about the videotapes that are alleged to be obscene, why would it be so important [to] shut down a business, put a deed restriction on...and then use the media?" he asked Whittemore. "They make these statements in public so the world knows if you're from Clearwater or you're from Miami or you're from...Orlando, don't be coming to Polk County...That's Draconian, because it has nothing to do with the individual videotape, which may or may not be obscene. If it was, why would they target the business as a whole and make all of them shut down in perpetuity?"

Even the county's lawyer, Philip Jay Spengler II, seemed to agree the county had little concern for whether or not the tapes in question were actually obscene. According to depositions from Hill and Judd, he told the court, "...the gist of it was to shut down your triple X store, for example, or your adult video store..."

"So they are charged, and they are facing, under RICO statute, substantial exposure to prison," said the bemused Whittemore after the tactics had been spelled out. "The state then offers a deal, not unlike the old west, saying, 'If you'll leave town, leave our territory [and] never come back...' then they'll drop the charges."

As of this writing, Whittemore has not yet ruled. Mason hopes he has the chutzpah to do the right thing. "In this case, I think a politically powerful minority is censoring and prohibiting the public at large from deciding for themselves what to view and read," he says.

Looking at this case against the historical backdrop of first-amendment cases, he adds, "Most are [initially] based on politi-



cally unpopular, socially undesirable causes; but if we're going to protect minority expression, someone has to step up to the plate and take the heat. Someone has to have the gonads to stand up and say, 'This is wrong.'

Whether or not a decision will be the politically popular one, there has to be a starting point, Mason says. "And the willingness to step out in front of the pack is what distinguishes a great judge from the run-of-the-mill judges."

Mason and Burris are prepared to lose the first round. However, they don't plan to give up the fight. "Win, lose, or draw, we're taking it all the way," Mason says. "However far up it has to go—there's no mountain too high." ❧

Contributing Editor Morris Sullivan has written for *IMPACT* for more than five years. A freelance writer and former high school teacher living in DeLand, Florida, Sullivan is also a playwright. His most notorious work, *Femmes Fatale*, contained the infamous "Nude Macbeth," which has been covered by diverse news media from the BBC and NPR to Playboy, HBO's "Real Sex," and Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*.

Death Penalty Update: One Step Forward...

By Kari Lydersen

"I'M THAT ANGRY BLACK MAN YOU HEAR ABOUT."

Those words were among the first from released Illinois Death Row inmate Aaron Patterson on Jan. 10 after stepping out of Pontiac Correctional Center, where he had spent 16 years on Death Row for a crime he didn't commit. Patterson was among three Death Row inmates released that day after receiving a pardon from Gov. George Ryan on one of his last days in office. The day after announcing six pardons (four for Death Row inmates, one of whom is still in jail on other charges, and two for already released men), Ryan stunned the world by announcing blanket clemency for over 160 remaining Death Row inmates, meaning commutations to life in prison for even the avowedly guilty.

Patterson explained to crowds of media and supporters over the following week that while he was happy to be a free man again, his primary emotions weren't so much gratitude and joy as continuing anger about his years of lost freedom and, even more so, at the fact that, in his opinion, scores of innocent people still sit in prison while the misconduct of prosecutors and police that landed them there has gone unpunished.

Patterson vowed not to stop fighting until every innocent person is out of prison and the system is reformed. Meaning he won't be able to stop fighting for a long, long time. While Gov. Ryan's actions were heralded around the world by death penalty opponents and human rights advocates, the fact is that the current administration in Illinois, like many others around the country, has vowed to continue the death penalty and begin refilling death row.

While national and international figures including Mexican President Vicente Fox, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Rev. Desmond Tutu and South African former president and reformer Nelson Mandela heaped praise on Ryan, his decision also drew immediate and virulent criticism from prosecutors around the state and many murder victims' family members. Incoming Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich denounced Ryan's blanket commutation and voiced his own support for the death penalty. And Illinois State's Attorney Dick Devine, whose office is being investigated by a special federal prosecutor for complicity in framing Patterson and other innocents, filed a lawsuit challenging some of the individual clemencies.

Ryan's decision came shortly after the governor of Maryland had reversed that state's moratorium on the death penalty, showing the slow and "one-step-forward, two-steps-back" nature of the struggle for death penalty abolition or reform. Meanwhile, in the days following the commutations, Mexican President Fox appealed to the International Court of Justice to halt the execution of 51 Mexican citizens on Death Rows in America, noting that their rights to receive help from their consulates had been denied and many of them were interrogated in English, though they don't speak the language well.

At a town hall meeting in Chicago on Jan. 15, about 150 community members spoke about their friends and relatives wrongfully incarcerated. Here, Patterson and other men who had been wrongfully incarcerated made plans to continue fighting for the cases of those still wrongfully in prison. Among those are reportedly numerous men framed by a police officer named Rey Guevara, who works in the largely Latino Chicago Area Five district.

"Black, Latino, white, we're all in this together," said Patterson. "We will get justice." ◀◀



Make an IMPACT

The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty as well as countless state and local religious groups and organizations opposing the death penalty publish action alerts whenever inmates' execution dates are set. These groups ask that concerned citizens contact their elected officials regarding these individual cases and the death penalty in general. It is especially important to contact governors since they are capable of offering clemency to Death Row inmates. Protests and vigils are held outside prisons during many executions. Visit these web sites for more information on the fight to abolish the death penalty:

Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty
<http://www.icadp.org>

Campaign to End the Death Penalty
<http://www.nodeathpenalty.org>

Death Penalty Information Center
<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org>

Against the Death Penalty
<http://www.againstdp.org>

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty
<http://www.ncadp.org>

Amnesty International
<http://www.amnesty-usa.org/abolish>

Roe v. Wade Status Quo

Why public opinion keeps activists in check

By Nick Gillespie

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this year's many observances of the 30th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court case that legalized abortion, was the relative lack of drama surrounding an issue that commanded front-page coverage throughout the 1970s, '80s, and '90s.

To be sure, pro-life and pro-choice (to use each side's favored term for its position) crowds thronged Washington, D.C. There was plenty of media coverage, both of the march itself and in the lead-up to the anniversary. And both sides aired apocalyptic visions of what would happen if the other side *really* got its way.

Yet overall, the commemorations were relatively ho-hum affairs, and not simply because of seemingly more immediately pressing issues such as war and the economy. It's because after three decades of legal abortion, the laws and customs governing the procedure are in rough correspondence with the actual behaviors and attitudes of the American public. This is a situation that perhaps fully satisfies no one, especially activists. Yet it should nonetheless be recognized as a considerable social achievement, especially given the topic.

According to most polls, including one by Gallup (conducted Jan. 10-12, 2003), around 25 percent of Americans think abortion should be legal under any circumstances, 14 percent think it should be legal in most circumstances, 42 percent think it should be legal in only a few circumstances, and 18 percent think it should be illegal in all circumstances. These numbers—which have remained relatively constant for decades—add up to a public that overwhelmingly embraces abortion in some limited form.

Support for abortion is not unconditional—there's far more comfort with first-trimester abortions (66 percent) than with third-trimester abortions (10 percent). But such strong feelings (66% in support) are predominant when the vast, overwhelming majority—close to 90 percent—of abortions take place. Were that to change,

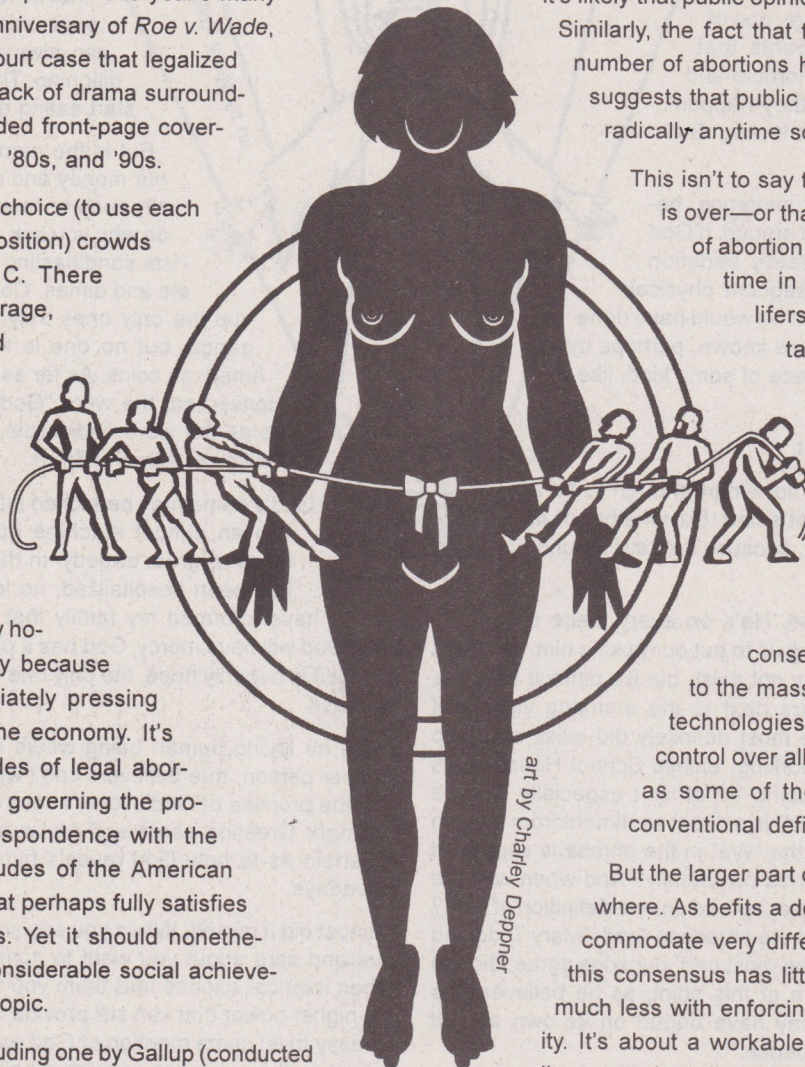
it's likely that public opinion might shift significantly, too. Similarly, the fact that the abortion rate and the raw number of abortions have been declining for years suggests that public opinion is not going to change radically anytime soon.

This isn't to say that the debate about abortion is over—or that laws governing the specifics of abortion won't continue to change over time in ways that bother ardent pro-lifers and pro-choicers alike. But taking a longer view, it does seem as if the extremes of the abortion debate—extremes that included incendiary language and calls for the murder of abortion providers—have largely subsided in the wake of a widely accepted consensus. Part of this is surely due to the massive increases in reproduction technologies that allow women far more control over all aspects of their bodies (even as some of those technologies challenge conventional definitions of human life).

But the larger part of the relative calm rests elsewhere. As befits a democracy that attempts to accommodate very different visions of the good life, this consensus has little to do with morality per se, much less with enforcing a single standard of morality. It's about a workable, pragmatic compromise that allows people to live their lives on their own terms and peaceably argue for their point of view.

Interestingly, that basic reality should discomfit equally both pro-choice activists, who understandably fear a Republican-controlled federal government, and pro-life activists, who understandably welcome the same thing. Regardless of whether *Roe* withstands possible legal scrutiny, regardless of whether George W. Bush gets to pick several new Supreme Court members, and regardless of whether Congress wants to severely restrict abortion rights, the mass public consensus in favor of the status quo virtually guarantees very little substantial change in any direction.

Nick Gillespie is the editor-in-chief of Reason magazine. This article originally appeared on Reason Online, www.reason.com.



The Word Of God Is Just A Word

by Adam Finley

I wasn't in the last issue.

For only the second time since I began writing for Impact Press back in 1997, I was unable to provide an article. The reason for my absence had to do with the near-death of a close relative, one of those horrible average accidents that seem a hundred times more horrible and not especially average when they happen to someone close to you. But luckily, God was there.

I can't actually verify that last sentence, because I never actually saw God around. If God had been there during the heavy sedation, brain hemorrhaging, and subsequent physical and mental rehabilitation, I think he would have done something to make his presence known, perhaps by adorning a varicolored headpiece of some kind, like a beret or jester hat.

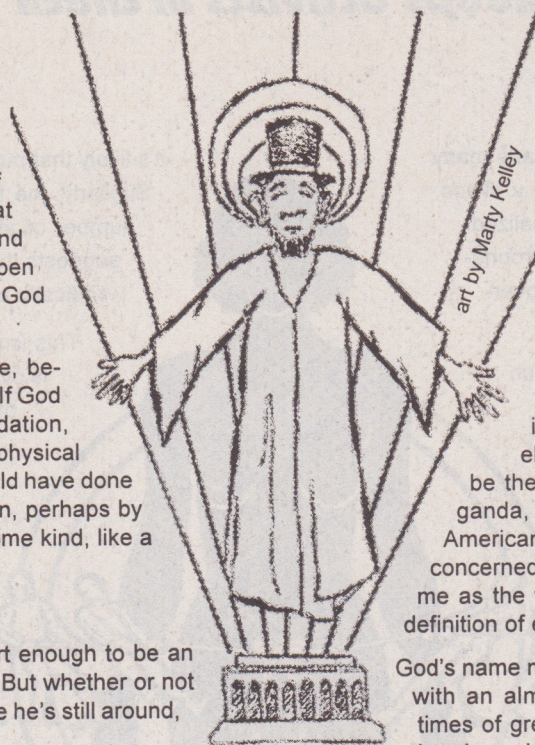
Or maybe he just doesn't exist.

Phil Donahue once said, "I'm not smart enough to be an atheist." Phil was right, he's not smart. But whether or not you believe God exists is moot, because he's still around, at least in name.

God is with us in subtle ways. He's on every piece of currency we have, calmly telling us to put our trust in him. This isn't actually God, who may or may not exist, but it's difficult to argue with a sentiment that appears next to the smirking visage of Abraham Lincoln, a man who most definitely did exist, and who was quite honest and hard working, unless School House Rock steered me wrong at some point. What isn't especially clear is whether or not "In God We Trust" is a direct sentiment from Lincoln himself, and just who exactly the "We" in the phrase is supposed to refer. Is Lincoln referring to his own family? And when was the last time any family in history ever agreed on one definition of God? Could it be that Lincoln wanted the phrase to read, "Mary Todd and I put our trust in God, and for the most part, our sons agree, though Robert Todd isn't entirely sure at this point, as he believes it is possible that the universe may have begun on its own accord without the aid of divine providence."

While certainly not as catchy as "In God We Trust," it definitely sounds more truthful. Did the decision to choose one phrase over the other have anything to do with God, or did it have to do with the fact that in order to accommodate the lengthier of the two phrases the penny would have to be greatly enlarged? And that this would add extra weight to a citizen's trousers, hence causing a rise in belt sales, hence causing a greater demand for leather, hence resulting in a cattle slaughter of almost epic proportions? And isn't cow-saving really more of a Hindu thing anyway?

All we can derive from this is that Abraham Lincoln hated people from India. It doesn't really get us any closer to answering the question as to whether or not God exists. It does, however, make blatantly clear the ubiquity of God's name in the United States. I myself used to mumble the words, "One nation, under God" almost every morning with my eyes half shut and my breath smelling



of Fruiti (not Fruity?) Pebbles. Was his existence made clear to me in a blinding flash of light every morning right before we started our multiplication tables? No, it wasn't, but I never forgot that name. Whatever your individual mind may deny you can always be learned through conditioning. That's how I once got a cat to start eating dog food.

But is the name of God as it appears on our money and in our lame Flag Pledge really such an issue? Naturally, it all depends on who you ask, but I don't see a lot of atheists sandblasting the writing from their nickels and dimes. Coin-collecting atheists would be the only ones truly hurt by this kind of propaganda, but no one is forcing them to just collect American coins. As far as the Pledge of Allegiance is concerned, the word "God" meant about as much to me as the word "indivisible," as I didn't know the true definition of either of them.

God's name may be etched into our history, but it appears with an almost machine gun-like consistency during times of great tragedy. In the three months my relative has been hospitalized, no less than fifty billion people have informed my family that God will provide, God will heal, God will have mercy, God has a plan, God is smiling upon us, and God is our only hope, the only one we can turn to in times such as these.

While no loving human being would ever wish tragedy to befall another person, true believers can't wait to comfort those in need with the promise of God's love, a love which comes in the form of Hallmark Greeting cards and Mylar balloons for those who are uncertain as to how God reveals himself in the terrestrial world nowadays.

I almost did it myself. When you see someone suffering whom you love and care about you want to comfort them as best you can. When medical science fails them you want to let them know there is a higher power that can still provide miracles. At times like these it's easy to let some mention of God escape your lips, whether you believe in the existence of such a being or not. When others are placing the life of an injured person in the hands of the all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-loving creator of Heaven and Earth, a simple sentiment such as, "I'll be thinking about you and I hope you get better" seems almost callous by comparison. You might as well be saying, "I talked to God last night, and frankly, he can't stand you."

I can't agree that God exists, but I can agree that his name is everywhere. It's been there since the day I was born, and I'm sure it will fall from the lips of friends and relatives as I lay on my deathbed. Perhaps someone will have the decency to purchase me an atheist greeting card, which would be a funny story to relate if I ever do come face to face with the one true God. Not that he would have to introduce himself, since his name has been hammered into my brain my entire life. And anyway, any friend of Abraham Lincoln is a friend of mine. ❧

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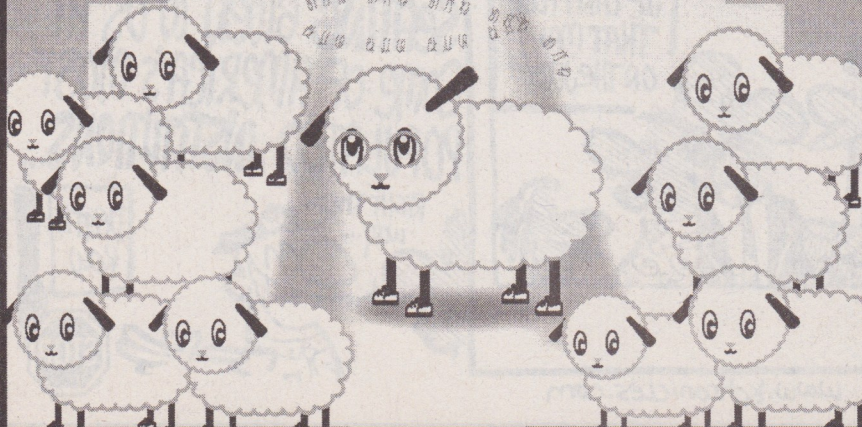
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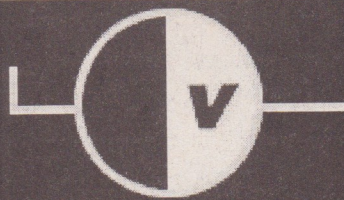
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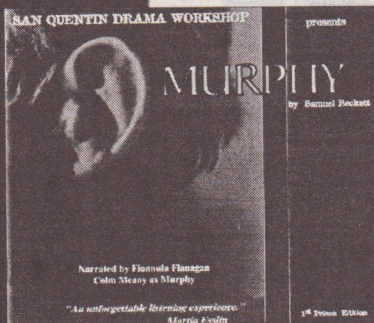


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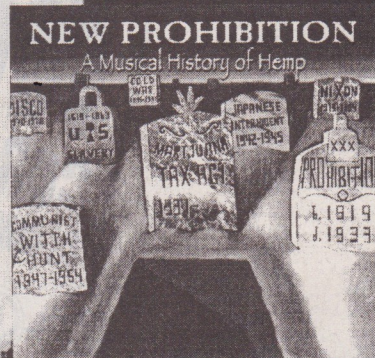
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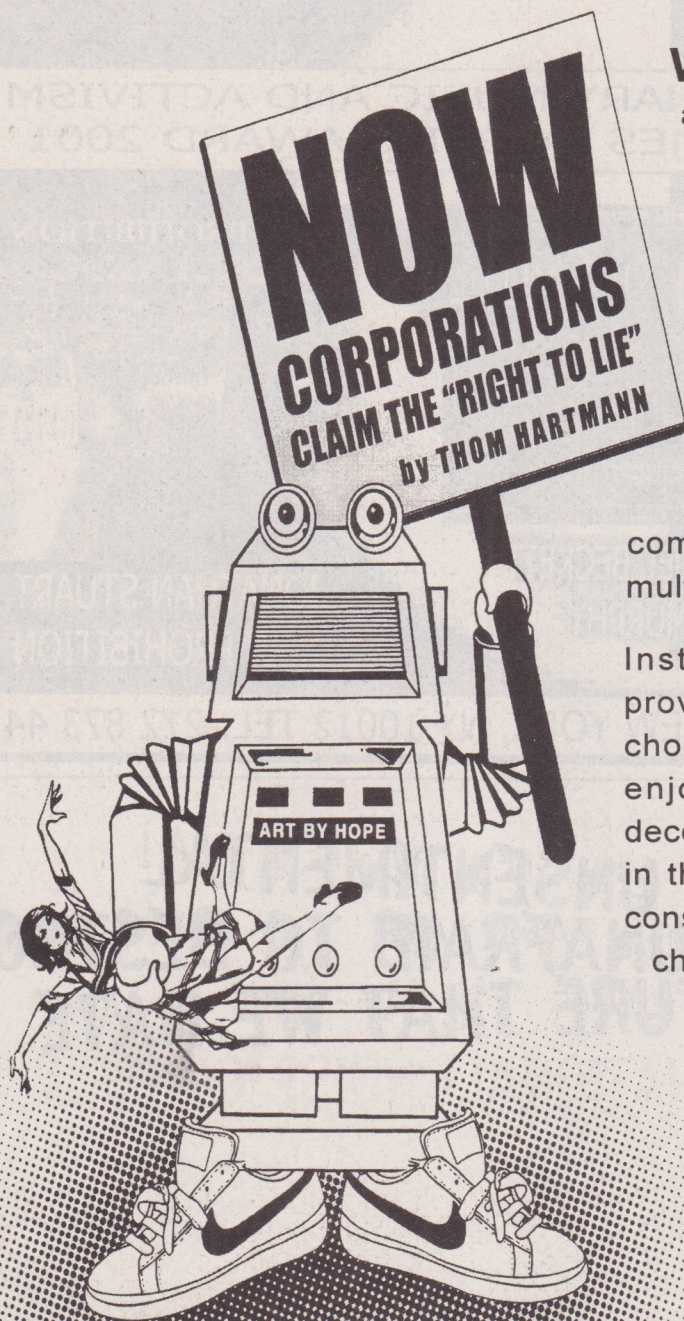
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WHILE NIKE WAS CONDUCTING a huge and expensive PR blitz to tell people that it had cleaned up its subcontractors' sweatshop labor practices, an alert consumer advocate and activist in California named Marc Kasky caught them in what he alleges are a number of specific deceptions. Citing a California law that forbids corporations from intentionally deceiving people in their commercial statements, Kasky sued the multi-billion-dollar corporation.

Instead of refuting Kasky's charge by proving in court that they didn't lie, Nike chose to argue that corporations should enjoy the same "free speech" right to deceive that individual human citizens have in their personal lives. If people have the constitutionally protected right to say, "The check is in the mail," or, "That looks great on you," then, Nike's reasoning goes, a corporation should have the same right to say whatever they want in their corporate PR campaigns.

They took this argument all the way to the California Supreme Court, where they lost. The next stop may be the U.S. Supreme Court, and the battle lines are already forming.

For example, in a column in *The New York Times* supporting Nike's position, Bob Herbert wrote, "In a real democracy, even the people you disagree with get to have their say."

True enough.

But Nike isn't a person—it's a corporation. And it's not their "say" they're asking for: it's the right to deceive people.

Corporations are created by humans to further the goal of making money. As Buckminster Fuller said in his brilliant essay "The Grunch of Giants," "Corporations are neither physical nor meta-physical phenomena. They are socioeconomic ploys—legally enacted game-playing..."

Corporations are non-living, non-breathing, legal fictions. They feel no pain. They don't need clean water to drink, fresh air to breathe, or healthy food to consume. They can live forever. They can't be put in prison. They can change their identity or appearance in a day, change their citizenship in an hour, rip off parts of themselves and create entirely new entities. Some have compared corporations with robots, in that they are human creations that can outlive individual humans, performing their assigned tasks forever.

Isaac Asimov, when considering a world where robots had become as functional, intelligent, and more powerful than their human creators, posited three fundamental laws that would determine the behavior of such potentially dangerous human-made creations. His "Three Laws of Robotics" stipulated that non-living human creations must obey humans yet never behave in a way that would harm humans.

Asimov's thinking wasn't altogether original: Thomas Jefferson and James Madison beat him to it by about 200 years.

Jefferson and Madison proposed an 11th Amendment to the Constitution that would "ban monopolies in commerce," making it illegal for corporations to own other corporations, banning them from giving money to politicians or trying to influence elections in any way, restricting corporations to a single business purpose, limiting the lifetime of a corporation to something roughly similar to that of productive humans (20 to 40 years back then), and requiring that the first purpose for which all corporations were created be "to serve the public good."

The amendment didn't pass because many argued it was unnecessary; virtually all states already had such laws on the.

Wisconsin, for example, had a law that stated: "No corporation doing business in this state shall pay or contribute, or offer consent or agree to pay or contribute, directly or indirectly, any money, property, free service of its officers or employees or thing of value to any political party, organization, committee or individual for any political purpose whatsoever, or for the purpose of influencing legislation of any kind, or to promote or defeat the candidacy of any person for nomination, appointment or election to any political office." The penalty for any corporate official violating that law and getting cozy with politicians on behalf of a corporation was five years in prison and a substantial fine.

Like Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics," these laws prevented corporations from harming humans, while still allowing people to create their robots (corporations) and use them to make money. Everybody won. Prior to 1886, corporations were referred to in US law as "artificial persons," similar to the way *Star Trek* portrays the human-looking robot named Data.

But after the Civil War, things began to change. In the last year of the war, on November 21, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln looked back on the growing power of the war-enriched corporations, and wrote the following thoughtful letter to his friend, Colonel William F. Elkins:

"We may congratulate ourselves that this cruel war is nearing its end. It has cost a vast amount of treasure and blood. The best blood of the flower of American youth has been freely offered upon our country's altar that the nation might live. It has indeed been a trying hour for the Republic; but I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country.

"As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety than ever before, even in the midst of war. God grant that my suspicions may prove groundless."

Lincoln's suspicions were prescient. In the 1886 *Santa Clara County vs. Southern Pacific Railroad* case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the state tax assessor, not the county assessor, had the right to determine the taxable value of fence posts along the railroad's right-of-way.

However, in writing up the case's headnote—a commentary that has no precedential status—the Court's reporter, a former railroad president named J.C. Bancroft Davis, opened the headnote with the sentence: "The defendant Corporations are persons within the intent of the clause in section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which forbids a State to deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Oddly, the court had ruled no such thing. As a handwritten note from Chief Justice Morrison Waite to reporter Davis that now is held in the National Archives said: "we avoided meeting the Constitutional question in the decision." And nowhere in the decision itself does the Court say corporations are persons.

Nonetheless, corporate attorneys picked up the language of Davis' headnote and began to quote it like a mantra. Soon the Supreme Court itself, in a stunning display of either laziness (not reading the actual case) or deception (rewriting the Constitution without issuing an opinion or having open debate on the issue), was quoting Davis' headnote in subsequent cases. While Davis' *Santa Clara* headnote didn't have the force of law, once the Court quoted it as the basis for later decisions, its new doctrine of corporate

personhood became the law.

Prior to 1886, the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment defined human rights, and individuals—representing themselves and their own opinions—were free to say and do what they wanted. Corporations, being artificial creations of the states, didn't have rights, but instead had privileges. The state in which a corporation was incorporated determined those privileges and how they could be used. And the same, of course, was true for other forms of "legally enacted game playing" such as unions, churches, unincorporated businesses, partnerships, and even governments, all of which have only privileges.

But with the stroke of his pen, Court Reporter Davis moved corporations out of that "privileges" category, leaving behind all the others—unions, governments, and small unincorporated businesses still don't have "rights"—and moved them into the "rights" category with humans, citing the 14th Amendment, which had passed at the end of the Civil War to grant the human right of equal protection under the law to newly-freed slaves.

On December 3, 1888, President Grover Cleveland delivered his annual address to Congress. Apparently the President had taken notice of the Santa Clara County Supreme Court headnote, its politics, and its consequences, for he said in his speech to the nation, delivered before a joint session of Congress: "As we view the achievements of aggregated capital, we discover the existence of trusts, combinations, and monopolies, while the citizen is struggling far in the rear or is trampled to death beneath an iron heel. Corporations, which should be the carefully restrained creatures of the law and the servants of the people, are fast becoming the people's masters."

Which brings us to today.

The U.S. Supreme Court will now decide whether or not to hear Nike's appeal of the California Supreme Court's decision that Nike was engaging in commercial speech, which the state can regulate under truth in advertising and other laws. And lawyers for Nike are preparing to claim before the Supreme Court that, as a "person," this multinational corporation has a constitutional free-speech right to deceive.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Exxon/Mobil, Monsanto, Microsoft, Pfizer, and Bank of America have already filed amicus briefs supporting Nike. Additionally, virtually all of the nation's largest corporate-owned newspapers have recently editorialized in favor of Nike and given virtually no coverage or even printed letters to the

editor asserting the humans' side of the case.

On the side of "only humans have human rights" is the lone human activist in California, Marc Kasky, who brought the original complaint against Nike.

People of all political persuasions who are concerned about democracy and human rights are encouraging other humans to contact the American Civil Liberties Union (put the address of the ACLU at the end as a resource.) and ask them to join Kasky in asserting that only living, breathing humans have human rights. Organizations like ReclaimDemocracy.org are documenting the case in detail on the web with a sign-on letter, in an effort to bring the ACLU and other groups in on behalf of Kasky.

Corporate America is rising up, and, unlike you and me, when large corporations "speak," they can use a billion-dollar bullhorn. At this moment, the only thing standing between their complete takeover of public opinion or their being brought back under the rule of law is the U.S. Supreme Court.

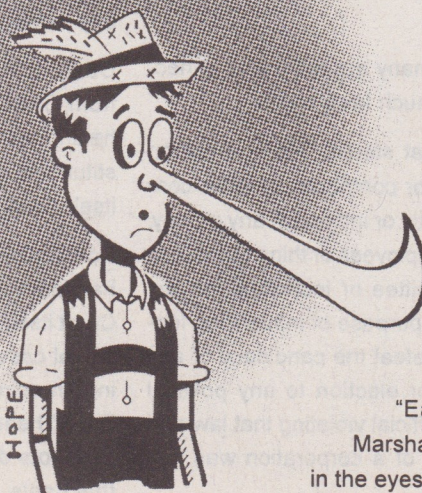
And, interestingly, the Chief Justice of the current Court may side with humans, proving this is an issue that is neither conservative nor progressive, but rather one that has to do with democracy versus corporate plutocracy.

In the 1978 *Boston v. Bellotti* decision, the Court agreed, by a one-vote majority, that corporations were "persons" and thus entitled to the free speech right to give huge quantities of money to political causes. Chief Justice Rehnquist, believing this to be an error, argued that corporations should be restrained from political activity and wrote the dissent.

He started out his dissent by pointing to the 1886 Santa Clara headnote and implicitly criticized its interpretation over the years, saying, "This Court decided at an early date, with neither argument nor discussion, that a business corporation is a 'person' entitled to the protection of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific R. Co.*, 118 U.S. 394, 396 (1886)."

Then he went all the way back to the time of James Monroe's presidency to re-describe how the Founders and the Supreme Court's then-Chief Justice John Marshall, a strong Federalist appointed by outgoing President John Adams in 1800, viewed corporations. Rehnquist wrote:

"Early in our history, Mr. Chief Justice Marshall described the status of a corporation in the eyes of federal law:



"A corporation is an artificial being, invisible, intangible, and existing only in contemplation of law. Being the mere creature of law, it possesses only those properties which the charter of creation confers upon it, either expressly, or as incidental to its very existence. These are such as are supposed best calculated to effect the object for which it was created.'..."

Rehnquist concluded his dissent by asserting that it was entirely correct that states have the power to limit a corporation's ability to spend money to influence elections (after all, they can't vote—what are they doing in politics?), saying:

"The free flow of information is in no way diminished by the [Massachusetts] Commonwealth's decision to permit the operation of business corporations with limited rights of political expression. All natural persons, who owe their existence to a higher sovereign than the Commonwealth, remain as free as before to engage in political activity."

Justices true to the Constitution and the Founders' intent may wake up to the havoc wrought on the American political landscape by the Bellotti case and its reliance on the flawed Santa Clara headnote. If the Court chooses in the next few weeks to hear the Kasky v. Nike case, it will open an opportunity for them to rule that corporations don't have the free speech right to knowingly deceive

the public. It's even possible that this case could cause the Court to revisit the error of Davis' 1886 headnote, and begin the process of dismantling the flawed and unconstitutional doctrine of corporate personhood.

As humans concerned with the future of human rights in a democratic republic, it's vital that we now speak up, spread the word, and encourage the ACLU and other pro-democracy groups to help Marc Kasky in his battle on our species' collective behalf. ❧

Thom Hartmann is the author of "Unequal Protection: The Rise of Corporate Dominance and the Theft of Human Rights." www.unequalprotection.com This article is copyright by Thom Hartmann, but permission is granted for reprint in print, email, or web media so long as this credit is attached.

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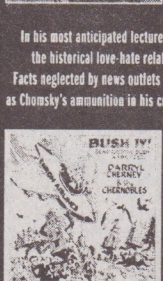
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PepsiCo to Parents: May We Pimp Your Children?

Soda giant PepsiCo, like many other corporate carpetbaggers, believes that schools are for sale, pupils can be groomed into pawns for profit, and teachers will follow dollar signs like trained sheep. With a student's refusal to capitulate to the nation's newest and saddest trend of corporations buying access in schools, how could this teacher not follow her lead?

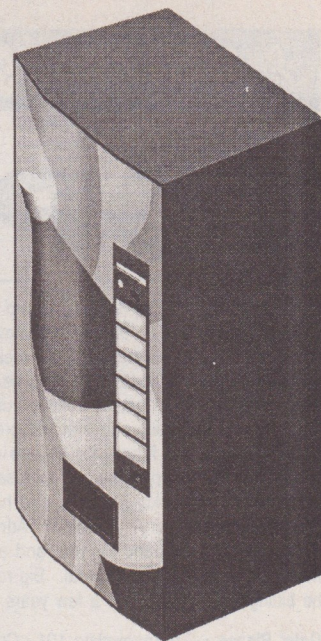
My principal informed me that "downtown," a reference to the superintendent's office, was vexed by my overt and public criticism of our school district's unholy alliance with PepsiCo. I was instructed not to state that I was an employee of the Salem/Keizer school district when I wrote editorials critical of our soda "contract" with PepsiCo. Emails about the pitfalls of the soda contract were not to be shared with fellow teachers during school hours.

With the opening of a 6th high school in Salem this fall, an innovative young cheerleader named Andrea Boyes got permission from a booster's club to sell bottled water under the new school's logo, the "Titans." PepsiCo, with exclusive pouring rights in the Salem schools, including their own bottled water, 'Aquafina,' quickly squashed the deal. Besides peddling colored sugar water to bring school districts begging for hard cash, PepsiCo would not let young Ms. Boyes threaten their \$27 billion dollar empire.

Ironically, Ms. Boyes was made to be the scapegoat, circumventing protocol and interfering with the sacred powers that invade public schools seeking brand loyalty and windfall profits: health be damned. Instead of scorn, Ms. Boyes should have been heaped with praise. Her courage persuaded me to act like the public servant I am and not a bought-out corporate quisling.

Pandora's box has swung open: spewing the ugly and twisted alliance between schools and a corporate seducer. Reading page 33 of the new West Salem High Parent/Student handbook reveals a colossal blunder on part of the school district. Under "Use of Tobacco Products, Alcohol and Other Drugs," the policy clearly outlines rules against caffeine products. "No Doze or caffeine tablets" are clearly grounds for administrative action against students! With "No Doze" specifically mentioned, the 100 mg of caffeine per tablet is considered a health threat. With a 12 ounce pop containing 55.5 mg, students need only drink two pops and they are in violation of the "no tolerance policy." I routinely see students walking with open 2 liter bottles in my school; obviously they are using too much caffeine as laid out by the districts' own policy.

The district claims that a ten year, five million dollar contract is too good to renege. What is not explained is that this dollar value is based on increasing pop sales 5% each year, every year of the ten year contract! What parents don't know is that PepsiCo has all the focus on cash, not children. They suggest the school investigate a "credit card" type purchasing for students. I imagine the parents could be billed later. The soda king suggests redoing the electrical capabilities in grade schools, where antiquated buildings could handle the new pop machines. "Pepsi would request the district name a funding program the Pepsi Scholarship." The only wrinkle you ask? "This program is to act as a volume incentive for students in the district." The more they drink, the more scholarship money is



By John F. Borowski

art by Collin Holmes

earned. How despicable can this multinational corporation be? How low will we grovel for needed money? Will we not employ the lessons of civic responsibility we claim to teach to our young adults?

Having two daughters, will I blindly accept that public schools are now actively encouraging students to pursue a life of osteoporosis and diabetes? As a teacher of over 24 years, will I not heed my own words of encouragement to the thousands of students I have taught: "one person makes a world of difference."

I know we live in a time of incredible fear. Stay quiet, stay numb and be a hapless consumer. Everything apparently is up for sale, even the health of children and the integrity of schools. The First Amendment challenges us to be citizens who question the tyranny of silence. Parenthood urges us to protect our youth no matter the might of those backed by the sacred dollar. Teachers need to reconsider their role as educators. Nowhere does their job description call for being obsequious lapdogs to corporate carpetbaggers looking to make schools their market for lifelong consumers.

I refuse to sheepishly follow the new order of corporate domination. Will others join together to get soda pop contracts and fast food out of public schools? Will the adults of this nation step up as elders to defend the health of children? PepsiCo is selling and I am not buying. Nor are young Ms. Boyes and her family.

The children of this nation are waiting to see what we do. Maybe "upsetting the apple cart" will be viewed as a good thing. ❧

John F. Borowski is an environmental and marine science teacher at North Salem High, Salem, Oregon. His pieces have appeared in PR Watch, the NY Times, Forest Voice, Z Magazine, Commondreams.org, UTNE Reader and Liberal Slant. He can be reached at jenjill@proaxis.com.

TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.



Boxingwater • *No Voice Will Go Unheard* • Spent Records
• Drive Thru Records look out! Boxingwater is coming with a mission to infest the world with their cross between Deviates and Good Riddance music style and their heart-deep lyrics striving for peace, freedom, unity, and justice. This band is definitely one that will grow on me, and many others in the future, for no one can resist their "throw your hands up in the air" choruses, perfect pitch harmonies and backing vocals, and hardcore breakdowns! You want fury? Passion? Adrenaline? Then Boxingwater is the band for you, and any fan of punk music, or good music in general. Big record labels will be hitting these guys up in a few years. (CMax)

Goin' Places • *Girl Songwriting 101* • Coldfront Records
• Here is a lovely collection of pop-punk gems for all you kooky kids who love The Queers and Jan and Dean. This is a really fun disc filled to the brim with 14 tracks to make your toes tap and smile a big dumb-ass grin. Really deep insightful songs like "Can't Get A Girl? Kill Yourself" will make you rethink your idea of life itself. (MK)

Gordian Knot • *Emergent* • Sensory • Gordian Knot's instrumental compositions are majestic and cinematic. With styles ranging from prog rock, fusion, and power metal, the group's members have put in time with Yes, Cynic, King Crimson, Genesis and Fates Warning. Just about every instrument gets a solo at some point, but not in a gratuitous manner. Four guitarists help make the songs layered and complex. *Emergent* is definitely worth listening to with headphones. (AL)

Grand Ulena • *Gateway To Dignity* • Family Vineyard Records • Forget all you know about rock music and its many subgenres, because Grand Ulena fits into none of them. Traditional song structure is rejected, replaced with confusing and hyper-kinetic riffing. Think of the chaos that is Storm and Stress, and you are in the ballpark. Starts and stops are commonplace, as are tempo changes in mid-song. Grand Ulena never hint at what's to come, keeping you guessing at all times. (AL)

Horror Show • *Our Design* • Deathwish • All go and no slow as they say. Amazingly combining an almost 80's vocal style with a modern punk-hardcore feel all at a blistering, arm-breaking speed, I'd try to compare them to something if I could think of anything they are like... But this sound is all their own. Songs of violence and heart-break, and I love some songs about heartbreak when they are sung like this. Completing the product with wonderful pink packaging (yes it's pink and still awesome.) As they say, this is some next level shit. (KM)

Howard Zinn • *Artists In A Time Of War* • AK Press • I don't think I've ever reviewed something as a "must own" for everybody before. I think any artist, writer, musician or the like really needs to take a listen to this spoken word disc from the historian of people's movements. His explanation of art, artists and their key involvement in movements (specifically anti-war movements) in history is as relevant now as ever, and as important too. (KM)

Jett Brando • *Jagged Junction* • Go-Kart Records • Beginning with the sonic chaos of "Heavy Rotation" this E.P. blurs many lines of rock, beats and great experimentation. What Jett does with the many sounds that are

meshed together here is what Jeff Magnum, Stephen Merritt, Beck and Elliot Smith wish they could have created themselves. Vocals glide smoothly with sharpness over the majority of instruments that Jett plays himself, the mood is captivating and the six tracks here are worthy of being replayed over and over again. Production of this release comes from the help of Dalek and Jesse Cannon, making this effort a keeper and reason to be on the lookout for future projects from this innovator. (JC)

Manda and the Marbles • *More Seduction* • Go-kart • Ahh yeah. This is power pop at its finest, as Manda and crew serve up a heaping mound of new wave revival with 1970's punk rock attitude. Sexy female vocals, evocative of 80's bands such as the Bangles and Go-Go's, overlay kickass melodic hooks as this trio makes a concerted effort to whale on your punk rock ass. You just kind of know it when a band has it, and this one does in abundance. (DP)

Murs • *The End Of The Beginning* • Definitive Jux Records
• Putting an official end to the beginning of his career, Murs is proving to be truly a Living Legend, and this release will hit you from angles no other album out there has even thought about coming from. Sure, Aesop Rock and El-P make an appearance but the split personality of Shock G and Humpty Hump on "Ricky Business" is the surprise catch here. The overall vibe gets a bit bumpy as a few tracks could have been left out to maintain a more consistent disc from front to back, but this is well worth checking out. Murs changes his flow from mellow to fast throughout, but his tales about changing ways on the tracks "Brotherly Love" and "Gods Work" inspire reflection on growing as a person and "Last Night" focuses on making it through another day. Not much is left untapped on this release, from tired relationships, wasting hard earned money, meditation through skateboarding and his color-blind journey through the underground, thankfully the title of the album doesn't read the other way around. (JC)

One Man Army • *Rumors and Headlines* • BYO Records
• Here is a rock disc that is actually good. The songs are catchy and fun with great singing and playing. This is a disc that will have you up dancing around whether you want to or not. It has not come out of my CD player for a long time, and I'm so much the happier for it. This is a great disc. (MK)

Organic • *The Life and Times of Sal Sagev* • Microcosm
• If only all three-piece punk bands could sound this good! Organic are fucking awesome. There, what else do you need to know? They sound like Crimpshrine, but better. They sound like older Jawbreaker, but more punk. They sound like the East Bay when Green Day was broke and Lookout! Records was still a small label. The vocals are gruff, throaty and in your face. The music is raw, with a pounding energy that makes you realize just how bad most other music really is. This is heartfelt, but not in the sappy emo way; this is honest, intense and furious. (CM)

Red Card • *Red Card* • Useless Chord Records • Wow, this is one badass album! Take one heaping helping of post-punk, mix in some electroclash and a touch of goth, and you're ready to rock out Red Card-style. Each song brims with an uneasy, nervous energy. There's even a

song titled "Relax", with almost taunting vocals that know you'll never be able to relax. Listen at your own risk, and I mean that in the best possible way. (CL)

Small Brown Bike / The Casket Lottery • *split CD* • Second Nature Records • I haven't head of any bands doing this since long ago when Bloodlet and Damnation AD recorded the Bloodnation stuff. Two great bands changing things up and putting out a collaborative effort that shines with the best of both bands. From the first track "Wrong Hometown" to their reworking of Queens "Under Pressure" this will knock you back and then some. I see this CD sparking a new trend in split-CDS, we can only hope they are all as good. Both bands are just different enough to really bring a special kind of sound out of this collaboration. (KM)

The Forms • *Icarus* • Threespheres • Time changes, dissonant chords, moments of soft vocals interrupted by screams make up this seven song album that spans over ten tracks. The packaging is definitely worth seeing with its numerous photographs (not of the band) and simplicity that is perfectly eye catching. My only problem with the layout is its repetitive exposure of Threespheres, the label. It isn't until layers are peeled away that The Forms are revealed. The melodies flow from one song to the next and the rhythm section carries it. The pronounced bass flows harmoniously, similar to the writing of Nate Mendel. That wasn't the only place I heard subtle Sunny Day Real Estate influences, but they don't sound enough like any band to ultimately compare them. The unique stylings of this band are enough to give *Icarus* a listen, but more than once because it gets better each time. I can't forget to mention that it was recorded with none other than Steve Albini and mastered by John Golden. (MP)

The Jazz June • *Better Off Without Air* • Initial Records
• Intricate, melodic and beautiful. The bass line to "Drugs and Models" won me over immediately. Sometimes dissonant, sometimes off beat, these thirteen songs show that The Jazz June has stepped to another level and matured lyrically and musically. The bass glides from song to song with its slightly punchy tone, while keyboards fill in the gaps. "These pills won't calm your nerves" has a driving pop like melody without losing any of its creative undertones. This is their fifth release on Initial Records and simply, it's indie rock from four guys who know it best. (MP)

Tiga • *DJ-Kicks* • IK7 Records • Remix master Tiga was chosen for the latest in the DJ-Kicks series, where he brings 25 continuously mixed tracks by artists such as Soft Cell, Le Tigre, Codec & Flexor, Swayzak, Stevie V., as well as his own tracks. The CD has an electro-tinged flavor, with plenty of retro-sounding synthesizers and house beats. (AL)

Troubled Hubble • *Penturbia* • Latest Flame Records • These are difficult times, my friends. By the time you read this, we could be at war with one, maybe two, countries. If you need a respite from all the insanity of the outside world, try the soothing indie pop of Troubled Hubble. They sound like Travis from the Dismemberment Plan fronting Built to Spill. If you don't love "I Love My Canoe," you're probably part of the "axis of evil." This is brilliant guitar pop that could just save the world. (CL)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

CD releases

1956 • The Great Sleep • Copter Crash Records • Dark caustic emo-hardcore that almost comes off as brilliant as the plan. Something like a hardcore Mission UK. Most of these songs bring a strong sense of creativity and musical craft. There are a few missed moments, a few spots that make you wonder if that was really the plan. Mostly this disc is right on however, finding its sound along the way. While I'm not completely blown away, I want to hear more from these guys. (KM)

3d5spd • Fever in the Ice Age • Two Sheds • First off, it's pronounced "three-dee-five-speed." Now, onto the album itself. *Fever in the Ice Age* has some prog rock touches, but not in the bad way everybody seems to remember prog rock. The subtle keyboards and interesting arrangements help separate 3d5spd from most of the indie rock crowd. "Wide Air" has a nice, indie rock kind 'o groove like the Promise Ring's "Picture Postcard." Vocally, there is a touch of both Perry Farrell and Wayne Coyne of the Flaming Lips, another band in 3d5spd's mix of sound. (CL)

Five • The Hemophilic Dream • Tortuga Recordings • Two tracks make up this CD, one 23 minutes long and the other one 14. True to form, Five leaves out vocals, allowing them to explore their instruments. Unlike previous releases, they seem to abandon their hard-charging sound, opting for a more hypnotic, layered one. It's not a complete transformation, just an evolution. (AL)

A Static Lullaby • ...And Don't Forget to Breathe • Ferret Music • I was originally attracted to the screaming/singing mix of hardcore because it was so groundbreaking. The beauty of well sung sensitive lyrics over somebody screaming from his stomach and letting it all hang out was such a fresh music approach when I first heard bands like Grade. A Static Lullaby takes that concept and makes it formulaic. With that in mind I like a lot of this disc. Talented guys, great songs, and beautiful cover art... Just be bold young fellows, its ok to verge off the road a bit. (KM)

Aalacho • Sugar • Aalacho Music • Aalacho is multi-instrumentalist Nathan Scott, who blends different kinds of electronica to create a moody, cinematic album. His addition of guitar gives warmth to the music, not that you could recognize what sounds came from a guitar. Scott enlists some guest artists to help him out, most notably singer Hannah Vaughan, who lends her voice to a rather interesting version of Fleetwood Mac's Sara. (AL)

Airlock • Drystar • Surge Recordings • Airlock could be compared to moody trip hop groups like Massive Attack and Underworld, but they have a sound all their own. Ersa Tasaszi's vocals are sexy, melodic and uplifting. The tracks on *Drystar* are slow tempo, reverbed and somewhat smoky, powered by electronic beats and keyboards. (AL)

Alias Clark • Florida EP • Pretty Pony • Bands like Wax and Too Much Joy are hard to come by today. I guess people think that fun pop rock stuff is just soft. Well, they're probably right, but that doesn't prevent it from rockin'. Alias Clark are a four-piece from Orlando, Florida who, despite playing no frills pop rock/punk, rock to the fullest extent. They combine a knack for big hooks, catchy melodies, and sing-a-longs with a punchy energy that is really addictive. As if that wasn't enough, the guys have a great (sick) sense of humor that adds a whole new dimension to what they have to offer. The only thing that Alias Clark does better than play the songs on this recording is how they play 'em live. Don't miss it. (CM)

All Is Suffering • The Past: Vindictive Sadisms of Petty Bureaucrats • Crucial Blast Records • All I can say is - holy shit. This Maryland quartet delivers the most violent death metal / grindcore I've heard in a while. What attracted me to their music is the fact that they write music that does not rely on vocals to stand on its own. Every once in a while, the singer takes a break and lets the music speak for itself. Stops and starts abound, similar to Slayer's *Reign in Blood*. This is an excellent record. (AL)

Allday Afternoon • Open Ended • Independent Records • Radio friendly acoustic rock/melodic pop is offered on the first full length from this North Carolina band. Vocal duties are split between three members and the harmonies are endless. A solid sound throughout, the guitar work is consistent and helps to maintain a direct flow feeling throughout the disc. The lone downfall is repetition from track to track where the overall disc stays pretty well in one ballpark without taking chances. Still, the sound is solid and may have this band headed in the right direction. (JC)

Amon Amarth • Versus The World • Metal Blade Records • Poised to take over the death metal scene, Amon Amarth is back with their latest, *Versus The World*. It is an onslaught of double kick drums, super-fast metal riffs, and guttural screams. Your neighbors will definitely call the police on your ass. (AL)

Andre Afram Asmar • Race To The Bottom • Mush Records • *Race To The Bottom* is a dub-influenced, world music inspired collection of downtempo tunes. Each was built starting with some live instrumentation, then layered with samples and other electronic effects. Different styles are mixed in many songs, Middle Eastern, Jamaican, Brazilian, Caribbean, and African. (AL)

As Hope Dies • Birthplace and Burial Site • Undecided Records • This

debut CD by As Hope Dies is pure metallic fury. I was reminded of Cradle of Filth without so much of the drama. Plus, Dani Filth wishes he could sound as utterly despondent as David Richardson. Some hardcore, much metal, and a bit of death metal is what you can expect from this EP. (AL)

As I Lay Dying / American Tragedy • Split CD • Pluto Records • As I Lay Dying starts this Split CD with 5 blistering tracks of hardcore influenced metal. The guitars are tuned waaaaay down, which makes them sound great when they slow down the tempo, which they do occasionally. Next is American Tragedy, who incorporate some British metal influences in their songs. (AL)

Atom and His Package • Attention, Blah, Blah, Blah • Hopeless Records • Imagine this: a man and a synthesizer making quirky songs about everything from mustaches to politics and there you have Atom. Also, imagine this in some weird accident where They Might Be Giants and Propagandhi mated and had a multitalented child and put him up for adoption with the adoptive parent being Reggie and The Full Effect and the outcome would be Atom and His Package. If you could follow any of the last statement you will more than enjoy this CD. (RP)

Baby • Black Market Baby EP • self-released • Baby is the brainchild of Craig Wedren, better known as founder and front man for Shudder To Think. This project incorporates some of Shudder To Think's punk attitude but encapsulates it in an electronic package. Canned beats, keyboards, and samples abound. Wedren collaborated with producer Mirwaiz on the CD opener, a cover of the Rolling Stones's "Miss You." (AL)

Baxter • Self Titled • Will Not Clear Man Records • This Fugazi-influenced rock, at least in the vocals, was raw from beginning to end. Two discs are included for the complete discography from this Chicago band whose members went on to form such bands as Rise Against, The Lawrence Arms and The Killing Tree. Moments are more indie rock than punk rock but they'll turn around and hit you again just when you thought they were done with distorted guitars, screaming vocals, quick tempo changes and driving drums. The first track on disc two, "Second Degree Burn," is one of my favorites. It has elements of Cursive songs but with a little added pop. Not every song on here is a gem, but it's worth listening to, finding the ones that really capture their full potential and combining them onto one CD. But for any Baxter fan, this is a must with 26 songs of rock. (MP)

Beans • Tomorrow Right Now • Warp Records • Venturing outside the membership of Anti Pop Consortium, Beans brings beats that are a mixture of solid sonic sound with a futuristic vibe. The rhyme style lacks behind his delivery, but lyrics are laid out with interest and are to be deciphered and pondered upon. The sound is at times old school but progressive at the same time. Many things happen inside these beats that go from steel drums, a lo-fi electro-dub and loop-to-loop flutes to sounds unthought-of, banging all the way through. This release is not for the mainstream 'pop-hop' fan but rather someone needing to reach outside of the normal grind known as life. (JC)

Beauty to Ashes • Reproduce the Common Practice • Pluto Records • Beauty To Ashes have been tearing it up since 1999, and show no signs of stopping. They are not afraid to experiment out of their hardcore/metallic sound by including two tracks that rely on soundscapes and sampling. Few bands have a vocalist that can harmonize and scream, but this one does. They also do a nice rendition of the Misfits's "We Are 138." (AL)

Bedford • Spaceships, Sex, and Jealousy: The Singles 1995-2001 • Microcosm Publishing • Just what everyone has been waiting for, twenty-five vinyl and unreleased tracks from the no longer in existence rock trio from Wilkes-Barre, PA. Bedford brings us catchy and predictable fast power pop punk with a few screams placed sporadically throughout the album. From the pink butterflies and video arcade game on the cover, I was expecting a girl pop punk band but instead was greeted with Elvis Costelloish vocals and punk with a twist of lime. "G.U.I." was one song that captured their vocal strength with the energy from backing screams and tempo changes. (MP)

Bill Milbrodt • Nuggets In The Sky! • self-released • This Annie the Clown musical adventure is a children's story told overtop musical compositions and laid out along 8-tracks. Taking place in Clowntown, U.S.A. the story begins with the "Puffnugget," which is a flower that grows after hearing you laugh, basically the people laugh and the "nugget puffs" during Annie the Clown's Nugget Day show. I don't want to ruin it for you so I won't mention what happens but I did have to go through the tracks a few times. Have you ever watched a cartoon and thought to yourself "I can't believe this is for kids!" then you get an idea of what went through my mind about the "Puffnugget" before I read the press release and made it through the disc. Overall the idea is genius, the production could not have been better. Characters play their parts out well and I'm sure kids (big and small) will get a kick out of this. (JC)

Breaker Breaker • Out Of Service • Martyr Records • Spinning this disc is a little like reading the obituary of somebody you would have loved to have known. This is the posthumous release of the late unreleased material of a pretty good straight-edge hardcore band that allowed themselves to break the mold. With all the elements that make hardcore

passionate and powerful, and enough creativity to keep it interesting. Listening to this you just have to wonder what it could have become. (KM)

Burt Switzer • 1977-2002 • self-released • Burt Switzer is a Boston area drummer that has played with numerous musicians throughout the years and this CD is a result of that. It is mostly low-quality recordings from his days with The Destroyed. It was hard for me, at first, to get past the horrible recording, but when I finally did I really began to enjoy it. At times this is very reminiscent of The Stooges and other acts of the same genre. (RP)

Busdriver & Radioinactive with Daedelus • The Weather • Mush Records • I know this is hip-hop, but it's definitely pushing the genre to the extreme and enveloping the sound with a number of outside influences, from samples of children's toys, old recordings and plenty of keys and computer goodness. Busdriver and Radioinactive bring a speedy flow that is as rhythmic as it is rapid. Meanwhile, Daedelus works to produce it all into a masterpiece, a wild journey through beats and bleeps, rhyme gymnastics and out-of-this-world lyricism. Put on a helmet; this is one hell of a ride. (CM)

C'est Mortel • self-titled • Two Sheds Music • C'est Mortel intend for their music to be played live. For that reason, their self-titled CD is divided into two "sets," each around 30-40 minutes in length. Their mostly instrumental sound is reminiscent of bands like Kyuss, Slint, and The Fucking Champs. (AL)

Calexico • Feast of Wire • Our Soil, Our Strength • Arizona's Calexico reflects their home state in their music, which has an smoky, desert-like feel. On *Feast of Wire*, they keep things mostly in a subdued, mid-tempo beat. The album is intimate, and you can almost feel the band playing right there in your living room. (AL)

Call Me Alice • Sweet New Disease • self-released • This theme-based 'hybrid' rock album is a mixture of electronic melodies fronted by seductive female vocals. In attempts to combine reality with virtual reality, the bands web site and live shows have been mapping out their journey to coincide with their music. This E.P. contains remixes by John X, but the overall project is too polished. The music is well constructed but the vocals sound like they don't belong at times. (JC)

Chalet • Chalet EP • Walkincol Records • There are only four songs on this disc and that is really a shame because they are cool and I'd like to hear more. Wild song structures and off-key improvisations make this disc more challenging to listen to than lots of commercial radio crap, but that is a good thing. The music is fast and gritty, but it will be a good party disc. (MK)

Channel 3 • Ch 3 • Doctor Strange Records • If you like the first song on this disc, you will like the rest of them. This disc is a pretty decent punk rock disc, but the songs have a disturbingly similar sound to one another. There is not much to say about it, really. (MK)

Chuck McCabe • Bad Gravity Day • Woodshed Productions • Touching on life and death, this release is acoustic based folk with blues and Celtic influences. With a long line of session players backing him up, McCabe sings on about bums, bars, hard workers, rude waiters and visits to a church and cemetery. The overall sound comes off as a cross between popish country-rock and seems a bit over-polished, like too many takes were done in the studio causing the emotion to turn stale. (JC)

Con Dolore • Sailor's Warning • Claire Records • In an effort to make their music a bit more pop, Con Dolore stripped down their lineup a bit and made *Sailor's Warning* shorter than its predecessor, *This Sad Movie*. Some aspects remain, like Kristy Moss's beautiful, dreamy vocals, complemented by Ed Ballinger's. The result is a pop gem. (AL)

Coronet Blue • Coronet Blue • Laughing Outlaw Records • Sprinkled with spirituality and passion, simply nothing can save this release. Vocals are traded back and forth between to singers but neither set of lungs carries the bands sound anywhere near originality. The music here is 80ish mainstream pop rock with simple riffs and ideas. (JC)

Crème Blush • Basket of Bets • self-released • The 80's comeback is in full swing, with plenty of bands coming out with newwave and electro inspired records. Crème Blush is one of those bands, consisting of two ladies with plenty of drum machines and keyboards. The vocals are mostly devoid of emotion, much like the electronic instruments they use. (AL)

Crooked Fingers • Red Devil Dawn • Merge Records • Who would have guessed that former Archers of Loaf frontman Eric Bachmann would re-emerge as a Tom Waits-style crooner? Though he sounds more like Neil Diamond on a bender, Bachmann churns out the same style booze-drenched, nicotine-stained, melancholy tunes as Waits. He's the wise, silent guy at the end of the bar, who observes everything and knows all too much. There's a trace of Nebraska-era Springsteen in Bachmann's storytelling, and a much-needed, underlying glimmer of hope. (CL)

d Henry Fenton • Autumn Sweet • Laughing Outlaw • Australian Fenton arrives with this stateside-recorded debut pop album, which incorporates elements of alt-country rock, and speaks of lost love and wandering. Fenton's clear but edgy voice guides us through his set, soft guitars pushing us through a world of non-biting loneliness, as though he is

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

aggressive guitar work. At times, they sound like a heavier Texas Is the Reason. There are some emo touches, with slow building arrangements, and some screamed vocals. It's nothing revolutionary, but it's not bad either. (CL)

Jello Biafra • Machine Gun In The Clown's Hand • Alternative Tentacles Records. • Could there be a better time for Jello to make a return to the spoken word realm with a 3 CD set? President Bush, Sept. 11th, the war on terrorism, globalization, all give him plenty of fodder. The ideas here are well organized and Jello has a great firebrand style that brings the truth and lets it hit as it needs. Really one of the best spoken-word on the subjects of the day I've heard so far. (KM)

Jesse Malin • The Fine Art of Self Destruction • Artemis Records. • Am I just being paranoid, or is Ryan Adams everywhere? Between touring with the Rolling Stones, feuding with Jack White, and countless other projects, the ubiquitous Adams found the time to produce, mix, and perform on former D Generation singer Jesse Malin's debut solo album. *The Fine Art of Self Destruction* is much more a folksy, roots rock album than the punk influenced rock 'n' roll of D Generation. The songs are solid and the production quality is quite good. Fans of Counting Crows and Adams, of course, will enjoy Malin's evolution into an alt-country singer-songwriter. (CL)

Jesuseater • Step Inside My Death Ray • Deathwish. • Even non-Christian we wasn't prepared to like a band called Jesuseater, mostly because I don't like things that are done just for the shock value. The thing is these guys can rock you good. Featuring the first singer from Dag Nasty, with a sound like dirty underwear on a supermodel, and enough attitude to fill any stage you know. They reminded me a little of Fall Silent. Give it a play and you will be walk with the converted too. (KM)

Kiss Me Deadly • self-titled • Blueskiestumbuck • Math rock meets post punk meets emo on this debut full-length release from Kiss Me Deadly. The guitar work is deftly creative, weaving an intricate tune that is enthralling. I'm also particularly fond of the vocal duties, shared between Adam and Emily, playing off of each other perfectly. It's an intense journey across a number of soundscapes, each unique in and of themselves, making this release that much more enjoyable. This is an album that is guaranteed not to bore you. (CM)

Kissing Chaos • Enter With A Bullet • Fueled By Ramen. • A side project gone full time featuring ex-members of Pop Unknown, Sparta, and Mineral with enough energy to power a small town at least. Sounding in the vein of labelmates Recover, a little like At The Drive In, a bit like a screamy Quicksand... that gives you an idea. Sound and song structure that pushes the limits of imagination, pulses relentlessly and begs to be heard live. Worth a listen that's for sure. (KM)

La Motto • self-titled • Does Everyone Stare? • La Motto features ex-Asexuals singer/guitarist Sean Friesen. The resulting ten-track offering is a rock and roll pop gem. La Motto is deep rooted in guitar rock that takes from such bands as The Replacements and J Mascis. The tunes are a good balance between energized rock and power pop, held together with a knack for strong melodies and catchy lyrics. This is one of those bands that could be on commercial radio but is destined to stay on college stations. (CM)

LES • The View From Here • self-released. • Citing such influences as Nirvana, The Pixies, Radiohead and A Perfect Circle, Les is a guy who knows the sound he is looking for and seems to have been able to get it on disc for you to enjoy. This is aggressive alternative rock that does not sound like every other piece of ear garbage that you hear on the radio. The songs are well written and have a distinct sound, which sets them apart. (MK)

Life In A Blender • Tell Me I'm Pretty • Fang Records. • Using a quirky, cabaret-like style, Life In A Blender offer up 13 unusual, pop tunes. At times they remind me of Cake, Squirrel Nut Zippers and They Might Be Giants, even Talking Heads, not necessarily blended (ha!) together, but at separate times. This is a fun collection of music that is diverse, strange and pretty damn good. (CM)

Life Is Bonkers • Songs To Crash Cars To • self-released. • This disc takes the award for the strangest disc I have reviewed in a very long time. These two gentleman sound like some weird offshoot of They Might Be Giants. It is an oddly interesting disc. You want to listen to it all the way through to see what will come next. Since it is only five songs long, it is worth the listen. (MK)

Little Jeans • Little Jeans • Asian Man Records. • As we all are painfully aware, the whole lo-fi, home recording thing really got out of control in the mid-nineties. Any jackass with a four-track, myself included, thought they could be the next Pavement or something recording crap in their bedroom. The one thing that most of these people were missing was decent music. A good song is a good song regardless of where and how it was recorded. Fortunately, Little Jeans has got the goods: solid indie rock tunes, with a hint of surf rock (hey, they're from Hawaii). "Eskimo Kiss," the lead off track, reminds me of the Pavement classic "Summer Babe." These guys should have a full-length album out later this year, so this five song EP will have to hold you over until then. (CL)

Loose Fur • Loose Fur • Drag City. • Loose Fur is an alternative music

geek's dream: Wilco's Jeff Tweedy and Glenn Kotche, and newest Sonic Youth member/solo artist/producer Jim O'Rourke. This disc has a very loose, relaxed feel. It's the sound of three guys who genuinely love making music just having fun. The trio mixes in some cool percussion and lots of random sounds to these folksy rock songs. (CL)

Mark Mallman • Who's Gonna Save You Now? E.P. • Guilt Ridden Pop. • On *The Red Bedroom* Mallman sets the stage in a dramatic, atmospheric way; the overall album is a solemn look at life through a lonely mans mind that is stuck in the 70's and has been dragged through the times. Five tracks that appear on this E.P. are outtakes from those sessions as well as parts 1&2 of the title track (part 1 is from *Bedroom*). Without hearing these b-side tracks, the appreciation for what the *Bedroom* album is may not have come to light. The piano-driven rock sound he brings is pure pre-indie with touches of late Beatles psychedelic pop, and comes off catchy and refreshing. Much thought and inspiration is applied by this singer/songwriter. Tracks like "Hook Hand" and "7 a.m. And Sober Again" come off haunting and truthful, there is enough here that having one disc without the other (along with the track "The Black Bedroom") just wouldn't be complete. (JC)

Matt Bonner • Signs of Passing • Stone Circle Records. • It's always nice, when reviewing a pile of discs, to run across one that simply defies easy description. This disc is very cool, but very hard to describe adequately. It is the kind of music you might hear on any radio station from rock to easy listening. It is that very escape from genre which makes it such a treat to listen to. If you like recent Pink Floyd, you will like this. But this is no PF knock off. Matt Bonner has forged a unique sound. That alone makes this a worthwhile disc. (MK)

Matt Taylor • Relay • I.O.U. Records. • For those laid back nights of relaxation or solitude, this moody and gentle disc is just the trick. Acoustic guitars, keyboards, cellos and a touch of spacey atmospheric vocals are a direct resemblance of Nick Drake, Van Morrison, and Cold Play to name a few. This album combines the *Into The Deep E.P.* and the *Five Songs E.P.* into one mesmerizing collection of songs by Taylor and could prove to be a good starting point towards further progression as a musician. (JC)

Meridians Divided • Blind • Will Not Clear Man. • Unfortunately, *Blind* may be it for Meridians Divided. After they completed this album, the band went on a break that looks like it's going to be permanent. Too bad, because this is an extremely well done album. The songs, the production, and the cover art are all top notch. Their thoughtful, introspective emo tunes are done beautifully. Reunion tour, anyone? (CL)

Michael • The Day After My Confidence • self-released. • Here's another impressive band hailing from Athens. The college town has cultivated many successful and solid bands. Add Michael to the list. They're a punchy indie rock quartet with strong pop influences. Michael has been playing together since 1993 and their maturity as a band definitely shows through on this release, their second full length. I expect many more good things to come from these guys. (CM)

Mira Calix • Skimskitta • Warp Records. • *Skimskitta* is 61 minutes of ambient, atmospheric experimental electronica. No gaps exist between the tracks, and sounds are made with, among plenty of vintage equipment, stones. The album has an eerie quality to it, and at times feels like the soundtrack to a horror movie. There are vocals, but only on a few tracks, and then they are buried, treated like any other instrument. (AL)

Mock Orange • First EP • Dead Droid Records. • In addition to being the state flower of Idaho, Mock Orange is the name of a four-piece Indiana band. On their previous full-lengths on Lobster Records, the band had more of a punk rock sound. Now on Dead Droid Records, Mock Orange has evolved into a more indie pop, amped up Elephant 6-type style. With a full length to be recorded by J. Robbins, who also produced this EP, in the works, things are looking good in the Mock Orange universe. (CL)

Mugs • Dust • Anti Records. • When I saw this CD, I immediately thought, "Solo album by House of Pain producer, must be hip hop." I could not have been more wrong. Mugs (AKA Lawrence Muggerud), has put together a down-tempo rock record. That's right, a rock record, and a pretty good one at that. Instead of singing himself, he got others to do it, including Everlast, Josh Todd and a haunting Amy Trujillo. His sound is very smoky, Pink Floyd influenced and incorporates some elements of electronica, hip-hop and dub, but they are kept at a minimum. (AL)

Never Heard of it • Limited Edition • Unmotivated Records

• Predictable pop punk rock in the style of The Ataris. First of all, the cover says NHOI. I guess I'm supposed to know what that stands for. Well, I didn't and thought "Noy," which is how it sounded when I said it out loud, was the name of the band. It's not even a cool acronym that would help you remember the real name of the band. The quality of the recording was pretty good. I've heard worse musically, but NHOI is producing what every other punk band is; melodic, catchy pop punk songs with whiny vocals and occasional harmonies. The inside cover, under the CD and the back is plastered with pictures of NHOI. Fourteen-year-old girls everywhere can drool over their over-styled, gelled, spiky hair and their preppy punk style. The black and white acronym cover is more punk rock than these pretty boys. Watch out Good Charlotte, these boys are ready for TRL. (MP)

New Mexican Disaster Squad • Abrasive Repulsive Disorder • Breaker Records. • Fast and loud 80's style hardcore that doesn't sound lost in time, but has a taste of today mixed in. NMDS have developed their sound in the past years and brought some really tight, hard hitting, socially relevant songs to this release, making it their best to date. Well worth a spin in your player that's for sure. (KM)

Nightingale • Alive Again: The Breathing Shadow Part IV • The End Records. • *Alive Again...* is somewhat of a concept album, channeling 70's prog rock complexity with British metal's soaring vocals, owing more to the former than the latter. The songs are very complex, highly melodic, and somewhat melodramatic, due to atmospheric effects and vocal harmonies. (AL)

Noam Chomsky • The New War On Terrorism: Fact and Fiction • AK Press. • Chomsky presents here in the style we all expect from him a timeline, history lesson, and a criticism of American policy as it corresponds with the concept of terrorism, both before and after Sept. 11th. Tracing the roots of the problems we face as a country, and the evidence that we have dug our own grave in many respects. A must for anybody concerned with the actions of our nation. (KM)

Open Hand • The Dream • Trustkill. • Hailing from Hollywood, this quartet doesn't care about the glitz and glamour, it's all about the rock. Combining numerous influences from punk to hardcore to eclectic pop, Open Hand creates an aggressive, melodic sound that is full of driving energy and emotion. In the end, you have a punchy, 11-track rock album that is as unique as it is familiar. This is one of those bands you're sure to hear more about, whether it's on local college radio or down the road on MTV2. (CM)

Potion • Circa • Blue Orange Records. • Potion is a two-piece electro-pop band from California. They play dancey tunes that are somewhat hypnotic, but lack any real creativity. The female vocals aren't bad, and it's hard to really judge a band based on a four-song EP. Overall, though, the band sounds like something out of the '80s underground pop-keyboard scene that doesn't work now and probably wouldn't have wowed too many people back then. (CM)

Premotions of War • The True Face of Panic • Goodfellow Records. • Clocking in at just under 20 minutes, *The True Face of Panic* is as ferocious as it is heavy. Rooted in hardcore, but exploring speed and death metal, Premotions of War never lets up, with an aural assault in the best of the metalcore tradition. (AL)

Pressure Point • To Be Continued... • GMM Records. • Now, this is what I am talking about, "Everyone grab a beer (even though I am straightedge) and sing-along Oil/Street Punk Music!" Pressure Point, who has dubbed themselves as "anything besides late for dinner," bring the madness to the insanity of Street Punk! With a cross between Rancid and The Dropkick Murphys, and with some elements of The Casualties and even The Bouncing Souls, this band is no where close to fading away, which may be why their record is named what it is. If you think about it, who can resist screaming hardcore guitars, insane thrash vocals backed by melodic



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taking time off from people to explore the music within. (DP)

D.O.A. • *Win The Battle* • Sudden Death Records • Who knew these guys were putting out new stuff. It's on the better side of good too, not sure I'd say it compares much to the earlier stuff, but there are some good punk gems on this one. Sadly I really didn't care for the "Just Say No To The WTO" anti-globalization anthem, which sounds too much like they said "hey lets write an anti-WTO song in 5 minutes." "Mexican Holiday" is a lot of fun. (KM)

Damien Jurado • *Where Shall You Take Me?* • Secretly Canadian • After last year's more rocking *I Break Chairs*, singer-songwriter Damien Jurado returns to his more subdued sound on his latest effort. Jurado's minimalist folk songs of middle America are reminiscent of artists such as Bruce Springsteen and Will Oldham. Whether he's exploring Americana or cranking up the amps, Jurado is an intriguing songsmith, like his frequent collaborator David Bazan of Pedro the Lion, whose character sketches of morality have an almost literary quality. (CL)

Dan Potthast • *Sweets and Meats* • Asian Man Records • I don't know Dan Potthast, but I'm guessing he's a geek. I'm one myself, and we can sense our own kind. When he's not fronting MU300, Potthast is churning out cool acoustic tunes in an Elvis Costello or a Weezer-ish, Rivers Cuomo vein. He's got the whole melodic, clever lyrics, and well-crafted song thing down. Buy this album and satisfy your inner geek. (CL)

Dave Corwin • *Many Hands* • Attitude • For the second time in this issue, I am at a loss to easily classify a disc. I am very happy about this. This disc draws from a vast array of musical styles and influences played on a wide variety of instruments including the Tabla, Gopichand, Doumbek, Bodhran, Kalimba, and many others. The songs on the disc that are the most successful are the ones that avoid western song structures and develop many layers of sound and rhythm. A nice diversion in a plastic music world. (MK)

Daycare Swindlers • *Heathen Radio* • Go-Kart Records • Some people have no clue how important reviews are and how the cheesiest one can ruin any man's reputation. Especially, when the music is so incredibly "far out" and unique in style that it can not be related to anything, so knowing this, here comes the cheesiest review known to man for a band of the diverse/counter-cultured nature. Daycare Swindler's are a cross between the vocals of The Vandals, Black Flag, and Exploited, combining with the music style of the Circle Jerks, 98 Mute, and Pennywise. While listening to this CD, it is impossible to slip into the "bored" state of mind, for the Daycare Swindlers can't bore you and their drummer leaves you breathless! Every song is different and leaving you wanting to know what the next song sounds like. How come I have never heard of these guys before? (CMax)

Dearly Departed • *The Remains of Marianne Mayweather* • One Day Savior Recordings • With emotional vocals and arpeggiated guitars, it's easy to hear influences such as Sunny Day Real Estate throughout this four song EP. It's not innovative, but they do what they do well. "The Masquerade" ended the tracks with some rock but then surprised me with an acoustical instrumental at the end, just enough to put my emo sweater back on and write a poem. This emo rock band was formed from members of Inside, Tension, Scarab and Helen of Troy combining intricate and beautifully melodic musicianship. (MP)

DJ Spinna • *Here To There* • BBE/Rapster Records • This release is arguably one of the tightest albums from The Beat Generation series. The hip-hop, jazz and R&B flavor here may have made this a top pick had it not been for the promo beeps throughout. Imagine reaching an answering machine...that would be the continued beep I'm talking about - made it hard to pay attention to this creative collection. Appearances include Jigmastas, Apani B, Jean Grae, Rise, Soulive, Vinija Mojica, Shaun Escoffery and Akil. (JC)

DOA • *Hardcore '81* • Sudden Death • The second album from one of the classic punk pioneers has been re-released. These Canadian rockers helped put punk rock on the map in the early '80s and this album is probably one of their best and most influential pieces of work. *Hardcore '81* includes such classic tracks as "D.O.A.", "My Old Man's A Bum" and "Waiting For You." But as an added bonus, this new reissue includes the four tracks from the Don't Turn Your Back On Desperate Times EP recorded live for John Peel. There aren't many albums that deserve being re-released, but this is certainly one that is well deserved. (CM)

Emok • *Crumbs* • Spaff Records • These three guys originally were based in Israel but moved to the states in 1998 to avoid the mandatory army requirements in their homeland. *Crumbs* is a five-song EP that is tight as hell, very aggressive and extremely creative. While fitting into a punk/math rock genre, they bend the boundaries to fuse elements of rap, emo and straight up rock and roll. There's a load of distortion and feedback, conservative but effective use of samples and song structures that will blow your mind. (CM)

Estrogenocide • self-titled • M.H. Records • Estrogenocide cites as influences both Depeche Mode and Napalm Death as the basis for their "synthpopgrindcore" sound. The vocals are both comical and violent in

nature, and have a snake-like quality, like a death metal singer who can't quite get low enough. The music features a lot of keyboards that remain pretty consistent throughout the twelve-minute disc. (AL)

Evergreen Terrace • *Burned Alive By Time* • Eulogy Recordings • Maybe Jacksonville, Florida will go down as the place that spawned Evergreen Terrace, instead of those Limp Bizkit pussies. Hardcore vocals are mixed with sporadic melodic singing, and a guitar assault that spares no one. Really enjoyed their cover of Depeche Mode's "Enjoy the Silence." (AL)

Fairburn Royals • *From A Window Way Above* • Two Sheds Music • Vocal harmonies and guitar melodies fuse well on this indie rock release that sometimes gets "rough-around-the-edges." At times comforting and other times straight-to-the-point jam sessions, this disc dabbles in a lo-fi pop sound with layers of background noises; but still keeps its edge within an overall project that is held together by good production. The first track is heavy on the pop-rock vibe, but the comparisons to the early works of the Replacements, Pavement and Guided By Voices, weather valid or not, give a better idea of what to expect here. Songs are based on everyday living and more than a few stand out such as "Anti-Drug," "For A Reason" and "Lonesome Townie Blues" just to name a few of the many on this album. (JC)

Feederz • *Vandalism: Beautiful as a Rock In a Cop's Face* • Broken Rekids • Do you think you are punk? Got yer Docs? Yer Rancid pin? These guys will smash your face in then steal all your money over the Internet. Here is the most anti-social band I have ever heard. There is a distinct Dead Kennedys feel to the low-end production and tendency toward minimal song structure. There is a message, which is obviously paramount to the music, though: Fuck everything, then fuck it again. As a special bonus, there are MP3s of each song included on the disc to help topple the music industry. You will like this. Really. (MK)

Flashlight Brown • *All That Glitters Is Mold* • self-released • What happens when thrash punk legends Rancid meet the smooth melodic punk and breakdowns of The Bouncing Souls? Flashlight Brown is produced with *All That Glitters Is Mold*. Sadly, this CD only contained three songs (with a bit of an enhanced CD portion), but in these three songs are beer sing-a-long anthems, rhythm driving guitar parts, vocals with a meaning backed by harmonies that I thought could only be produced by the "Daily Epitaph Band." The guitar parts bring in the two different genres as they expand through the great music style such as ska, garage rock, Oil, Punk, etc. Their music is symbolic to their lives and they have fun with it! So do remember Foxy Lady? When you're feeling down, pop in some Flashlight Brown! (CMax)

Four! • self-titled • Paco Garden • This is all of Four!, their album, vinyl tracks, comp tracks, and some rare gems. All in all, it amounts to 35 tracks of snotty pop punk in the same vein as Screaming Weasel. And it's fucking good. No, it's great. Colorado was lucky to have these guys rockin' the state for so long. This discography covers the band's entire lifespan, from 1994 through 1997. What makes Four! so great is that, while there have been a number of amateur, crappy bands duplicating this style of pop punk, I have heard few (if any) that are as adept at it as them. If you need a real punk rock fix, this is it. (CM)

Garrett Sawyer • *Anthem* • Music Discovery Network • Garrett is a singer/songwriter from California. He performs well-orchestrated pop tunes that have strong melodies and an Americana kind of feel. However, I'm not too fond of his vocals. They aren't awful, but they're just not very strong. I think Garrett would be better off finding another singer and stick with his songwriting. (CM)

Garrison • *The Model* • Iodine Recordings • There is something about a Garrison record that sounds just like, well, a Garrison record actually. On the landscape of indie music they have done something only the landmark greats have been able to accomplish, to craft a sound that is distinct to them. This latest offering holds the standard, and its only weakness might be that it doesn't push that standard. Hell, you can't ask too much I guess. This one falls only slightly behind "Be A Criminal" as some of their best stuff to date. (KM)

Geography/Foxhole • *Split CD* • Chumpire • Chumpire presents a fourteen song split CD from Geography and Foxhole. Geography starts off with some heavy power punk, with those screaming vocals the kids are so crazy about nowadays. "Kinetic" has a fat ass guitar riff straight out of the Helmet songbook. Next up, Foxhole delivers some chaotic and energetic indie punk. (CL)

German Cars vs. American Homes • *One in a Million* • Mishap Productions • Quirky, artsy, and energetic are some of the ways to describe German Cars vs. American Homes. Comparable to Landspeedrecorder, the Aquabats, Devo, and Frank Zappa, they hardly have a formula when composing music. Aside from singing, spoken word and even conversations are used to deliver lyrical content. Regular instrumentation is augmented with cello, keyboards, toy piano, vacuum cleaner, and "human metronome," whatever that is. (AL)

Gold Circles • *Abuse The Magic* • Copter Crash Records • With their

sound running in many directions, this Kent trio pushes out an album that comes off garage-rock heavy in that the many moods resemble an early morning/late evening jam session. Vocals are full of anguish, percussion is raw and guitar work is not so much shredded grunge as it is thick distorted metal. Aside from the aggressive drive musically, the lyrics are well written and are what really stand on their own. Stories of women coming and going and a little smoke to get you by are fitting tales during the horrid Northeast Ohio winters. (JC)

Good Clean Fun • *Positively Positive 1997-2002* • Equal Vision Records • This retrospective collects five years of songs by Good Clean Fun, thirty of them to be exact. This is straight edge hardcore at its best, with short, super fast songs and hurried up vocals. A few of the songs have never before been released, but are now yours to enjoy. (AL)

Gresham • *It's Always Been There* • Function 8 • This is the ultimate feel good album. Acoustic guitars meet Rhodes keyboards in a jazz-meets-folk-meets-rock concoction. Gresham's voice is both wise and smooth, and Tommy Guerrero's bass and guitar playing adds to the laidbackness. It is quite obvious they are from California. (AL)

Harkonen • *Shake Harder Boy* • Hydra Head Records • Harkonen's sound can be described as slowed down, sludge metal with hardcore influences. They keep it steady in the mid-tempo range, going for size rather than speed. The vocals are easier to understand than most hardcore bands, yet keeps all the aggression. (AL)

Henry • *Cyanide* • self-released • On their debut E.P. this trio mixes folk-pop, grunge and indie rock to make a disc that bounces with influences from the likes of Dinosaur Jr., The Velvet Underground, Patti Smith, R.E.M. and Weezer. This album starts out heavy and transitions into a multi-dimensional experiment that continues to sound better with each listen due to the changes in sound and style. Nothing here is too serious, just a good time collection of songs. (JC)

Hilltop Distillery • *Died In The Woods* • State Byrd Records • This mostly instrumental band creates music that is engaging and hypnotizing at the same time. They incorporate elements from math rock and jazz, evidenced by their frequent seemingly improvised breakdowns. The few vocals that show up are given secondary importance. (AL)

Hollis and the Mighty McGregor • *Miss The Plane* • self-released • Hollis and McGregor meet in Glasgow, Scotland and this debut album is the culmination of their efforts. It's 13-tracks of mellow-ish indie pop that flows from one tune to the next. It's a good thing these guys met, 'cause they make beautiful music together. (CM)

Hope And Suicide • *Razorblade Smile* • Ides Of March Records • Scott from Bloodlet's side project, and it sounds just like that. Faster and harder than the newer Bloodlet stuff, this will remind people mostly of older straight up metal-core Bloodlet material with a slight feel of something newer. Scott's powerful voice is in full form, but this really isn't much a departure from anything else he has done. (KM)

Human Drama • *Cause and Effect* • Projekt Records • This CD will only be available on www.humandrama.net, and it is worth it. It has a melancholic and smoky feel. You can feel the sad resignation in Johnny Indovina's voice as he sings about choices taken and not taken in his life. The music is somewhat subdued, with some mellow beats, keyboards and guitars. (AL)

Icons of Filth • *Nostradamnedus* • Go-Kart Records • Icons of Filth have been going at it for twenty years, and they have never sounded better. *Nostradamnedus* is hardcore punk that does not rest for a minute, with angry vocals and socio-political lyrics denouncing capitalism and assailing corporate greed. (AL)

Immortal Lee County Killers • *Love Is A Charm Of Powerful Trouble* • Estrus Records • This raucous band tears out the gates with furious intensity, ripping your ears to shreds with their garage punk angst. They combine punk elements with the best of classic rock and country blues. You end up with 11 sweat-soaked tracks that are hard to ignore. These guys must put on a sick live show. (SM)

Immortal Technique • *Revolutionary Vol. 1* • Viper Records • The first track "Creation & Destruction" uses a RZA beat from the Notorious B.I.G. track "long Kiss Goodnight" and sets the tone for things to come. Immortal is a Latino emcee that spits political, insightful and very opinionated tales about life and the real problems that separate people of the world, which he explains is not by race but rather by class. The overall disc brings to mind a Killah Priest or Wu-Tang Clan "Killa Bees" kind of vibe where the treble stands out and the bass serves as the accompaniment. His flow is sincere and filled with angered concern. Spoken word pieces are included as well, most notably the must hear "The Poverty of Philosophy." Once you swallow your initial reaction to what is provided here, you soon begin to form your own outlook on the world around you. Not much info came provided with this disc other than the contributions and production credits are from the likes of Jean Grae, Rheturik, Pumpkinhead, Blackpanther and Poison Pen among others. (JC)

Into Ashes • *If You Need A Reason* • Copter Crash Records • If You Need A Reason is a six song EP for this quartet. Into Ashes features some

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

harmonies, and musicians who know their instruments better than you know the August '02 issue of *Playboy Magazine*? Their words of unity, anti-racism, fascism, and hate mixed in with an incredible lineup of punk rock knowledge and capabilities will leave the generations of punks craving for more, and Pressure Point is just what they need. It's a punk rocker's dream! (CMax)

Pretty Mighty Mighty • *Normal* • **Deraileur Records** • Despite my childish urge to hate anything and everything associated with Ohio after the Fiesta Bowl debacle, I am really digging the latest release from Columbus' Pretty Mighty Mighty. How can anyone, even a distraught Hurricanes fan, possibly resist this hook-laden indie rock? Apparently these guys have been around for over a decade, and I'm surprised they haven't garnered more attention with songs like this. All right, Buckeye state, you win! (CL)

Primitive Painter • *Armado in the Snow EP* • **Dead Digital** • The title track for this EP sets the tone with a beautiful melody and a muffled house beat. The next three tracks continue the exploration of house music, in a style similar to Aphex Twin's earlier stuff. (AL)

Pulseprogramming • *Tulsa for One Second* • **Aesthetics Records** • Aside from Bogdan Raczynski's *mylovelove*, not much IDM / glitch music has been concerned with emotions. Pulseprogramming explores moods with the use of vocals, adding a bit of a pop edge to their music, while keeping the electronica intact. The overall atmosphere is a mellow one, especially due to their hushed, beautiful keyboards. (AL)

Punchbuggy • *The Great Divide CD* • **Does Everyone Stare? Records** • I've heard of these Canucks before. One of those conversations you have in bars when things get quiet between friends and you start talking music. It was on that long ago and mostly forgotten conversation that I picked this CD up and gave it a spin. Punch is a good word, melodic punch. Some of the songs are slightly watered in the pop structure, and I think it's a missed turn and a wrong direction for them. When the music doesn't go that route it's great. (KM)

Putrescine • *self-titled* • **3 Bay Hopper** • Putrescine's (AKA H NCH CH CH NH) ultimate goal is to destroy everything in their path, employing a wall of thick guitars and distorted bass lines, frenetic drumming and ear-piercing vocals. They incorporate math rock's complexity with hardcore's ferocity in a not-soon-forgotten sound. (AL)

Re:Cooperation • *Transatlantic Collaboration* • **Uncle Buzz Records** • It took David Cooper Orton and James H. Sidio five years to put this project together. They were drawn to each other by their love for sampling sounds, and they express that love in this recording. Taking a cue from Brian Eno and Robert Fripp, they create loopy, somewhat ambient passages that evolve into more beat oriented material as the record progresses. (AL)

Reaching Forward • *Complete Discography* • **Martyr** • Rapid flowing hard-hitting old school hardcore from the Netherlands. 32 songs with some live covers of some classics that are pretty good. Evidently in the euro-hardcore sphere these guys make some noise, so this release of a "complete discography" puts together everything that has come before, and is hard to find in the States and gives us Yanks a good introduction to one of Europe's heavy weights. (KM)

Red Velvet Revolution • *Bring It On* • **self-released** • RVR is a quartet from Canada that plays college rock with influences taken from metal, classic rock and punk. The tunes are very mainstream and radio-friendly. The lyrics, though, are quite intelligent and, in some instances, socio-politically charged. And, I'm pretty sure these guys are a bunch of ganja smoking cats, since this release is labeled as RVR 420. I doubt they have 419 other releases. Their herb smoking definitely comes through in the style of music they play. Smoke up! (CM)

Rizzudo • *self-titled* • **Moodswing Records** • A mostly instrumental band manned by three brothers, Rizzudo makes eclectic and sometimes quirky rock music. They sometimes sing, but their voices are so deep in the mix that I missed them upon first listen. Their use of Roland and Moog keyboards adds a touch of retro without making this an 80's revival album. My only complaint was that the album was too short. (AL)

Robert Jackson • *Personal Jesus* • **AIF Records** • For over ten years, Robert Jackson has been making music. This release showcases ten tracks of rock with elements of acoustic, metal and classic rock mixed in. Both lyrically and musically, this is a strong release. Jackson definitely has a knack for creating solid rock tunes that, while remaining creative, can appeal to a mainstream audience. (CM)

Running Like Thieves • *Same Time Next Year* • **Livewire Records** • Some rock, some punk, some hardcore, what more could any scene kid with a Hot Water Music sticker on his car want? Well, it's not quite HWM, more like Pennywise meets Motorhead. The drums were muffled at times and took away from some of the recording, although they seemed better on some songs than others. This album seemed like it had potential, but I think the second track, "Your Version of the Truth" sums up the album better than any long winded review could. "It goes on, it goes on, it goes on and on and on and on." (MP)

Samus • *Desengano* • **Crucial Blast Records** • Samus is for those who like their music with no apparent direction. While the overall style of Desengano leans in the heavy / sludge rock direction, the band sounds more like an improvisational outfit than a group playing prewritten songs. (AL)

Scissorfight • *Potential New Agent for Unconventional Warfare* • **Tortuga Recordings** • Even though this CD has six tracks, only four are songs. One is mostly silence, and another is some guys talking in what I think is German. The four songs are pretty good, heavy on the low end with plenty of fuzz. Excellent listening for fans of High on Fire and Scene Killer. (AL)

Slick Fifty Seven • *The Ghost of Bonnie Parker* • **Laughing Outlaw Records** • This disc has, without doubt, the creepiest fucking picture I have ever seen on a disc. Yikes. Here is your ration of bar-brawling, bottle-busting cow punk for the new year. This is a raucous, fun romp through the southwest, tanked up on beer and Hank Williams records. This will grow on you whether you like it or not, but you will like it. (MK)

Slobot • *A Banner Year For Slaughter* • **Uterine Fury Records** • Slobot doesn't make music. They combine tape loops and samples with noises and vocals in the rather experimental *A Banner Year for Slaughter*. No beats. In fact, nothing that even resembles a song appears on this record. You have been warned. However, there is a video included in the disc that is amusing. (AL)

Slow Reader • *Self-Titled* • **Fueled By Ramen** • We could title this one, "Rory and Gabe from the Impossibles do their best Elliot Smith impression." With that in mind this is really pretty damn good. If you don't think "this is those guys from the Impossibles" you will love this record. This couldn't sound fess like the Impossibles. Very impressive that they had these songs rolling around inside their heads the whole time. It's a cold day wrapped up in a blanket kind of disc. (KM)

Snowy • *Lilywhite* • **PVC Lotus** • Snowy is a studio collaboration of Steven Roback, co-founder of L.A.'s Rain Parade, and vocalist Bonni Evenson, whose ghosly vocals are in the forefront of soft lullabies. It creates a kind of Mazzy Star mood, very melancholy, soft and swaying. It is definitely a record for those who are between periods of joy in their lives, or for those who wish to be reminded of the periods of sweet sadness, which are often more meaningful. (DP)

Sometimes Why • *Presents To: All Loose Ends* • **Goodtimeszy Music** • Tight production pushes this three piece along with authority and attitude. This release is heavy on guitar and musical arrangements that blend well with high-pitched vocal melodies; they come off strong and fit perfectly with their sound. Though the vocals do get tired at times everything is intense here, but not too intense, lyrics stand out as well. The fine line between alt-rock and radio punk is one thing that comes to mind. (JC)

Songs: Ohia • *The Magnolia Electric Co.* • **Secretly Canadian** • This is veteran indie band Songs: Ohia's 7th full length record. They come from humble Midwest and Appalachian roots of poor economy and dismal weather, and that mood is somberly captured in these wistful tunes. It's a different kind of blues, a mesh of country "working class rock" or "white soul." This music is real, it speaks of hard times and a small ray of hope for better ones ahead. (DP)

Spengler • *We Need A Miracle* • **Blue Skies**

Turn Black • I have to wonder if Spengler is named after Harold Ramis' character Dr. Egon Spengler in "Ghostbusters." This self-proclaimed "not for profit" trio based out of Montreal has shared the stage with the likes of Mike Watt, And You Will Know Us By The Trail of Dead, and Owls, among others. The songs on *We Need A Miracle* share a common theme of the encroachment of urban society into nature, particularly their native home of Canada. Intricate guitar work and unique song arrangements provide a solid foundation for their lyrical message. Spengler is no Ray Parker, Jr., and that's a good thing. (CL)

Spiv • *Don'tcha Know* • **Pop Sweatshop** • Chris Barber is Spiv. He plays pop rock tunes that use plenty of harmony and melodies. It's a ten-track, catchy release that is very radio-friendly. Production on this release was done by Ken Stringfellow, who has done work with the Posies, Big Star and REM. (CM)

Squirtgun / Teen Idols • *The Dysfunctional Shadowman Split CD EP* • **Asian Man Records** • Here's a four-song pop punk treat for lovers of Screaming Weasel, The Queers and The Ataris. Each band does two tracks, with both bands making tremendous use of catchy melodies, great hooks and hard-to-resist tempo changes. It's too bad there are only four songs, but it is a limited edition (2,000 copies) release and the tunes are damn good. (CM)

Subincision • *Jingo* • **Substandard** • Disappointment is something I am going to have to cope with from now until the day I die. When discovering this CD, I paid no attention to any other CDs in my grasp, then reading the press that came with it, I popped it in my CD player hoping for something incredible. What I got was a band that displays "false imagery" and a band that does it well. On their CD pamphlet there was reference to anti-war and army slogans, pictures of mockery, etc. In there lyrics was none of this. Their style was that of a combination of The Misfits and Devo; sure, it sounds unique, but it down right blows! This band must be out to preach what they "think" they are against, propaganda. (CMax)

Sylvie • *I Wish I Was Driving* • **Does Everyone Stare? Records** • Its great when something unexpected comes along like this one. A really subtle combination of driving indie-rock and soft melodic charm. Canada's Sylvie diverge enough from the path of known to explore something that begs the ear to explore. At times they sound sort of like Jawbox on Valium. (KM)

Symphorce • *PhorcefulAhead* • **Metal Blade Records** • Long live power metal! High pitch, melodic vocals are at the center of Symphorce's music, backed up by razor sharp riffing and powerful drumming. Even though reminiscent of bands like Helloween, Judas Priest and Queensryche, this is no 80's band. They are centered in the present with an eye toward the future of metal. (AL)

The Arrivals • *Exsenator Orange* • **Thick Records** • This is the sophomore release from South side Chicago quartet The Arrivals. These guys have put together a solid album with notable Naked Raygun influences. With straightforward riffage, sincere vocals and a strong rhythm section this is a truly rocking release. (RP)

The Blam • *self-titled* • **self-released** • The Blam is a four-piece rock band from Brooklyn. The opening track sounds a lot like The Strokes, which was really disappointing. Although the first track left a sour taste in my mouth, I'm really glad I endured the rest of the album. After a few spins, these guys began to slowly show their differences from all of those other hyped up NY bands. The Blam has blended and borrowed styles from bands like The Jupiter Satellite and The Strokes to form their own sound. (RP)

The Blinding Light • *Glass Bullet* • **Deathwish, Inc.** • Led by the painful screams of Threadbare vocalist Brian Lovro, hardcore outfit The Blinding Light should really be called *The Deafening Light*. Metal guitar work is present, with nods to Slayer and Converge, as is the machine gun drumming of death metal. (AL)

The Bottoms Up Blues Gang • *South Broadway Blues* • **self-released** • This is blues, through and through. The St. Louis trio features solid female vocals, great acoustic guitar work and killer harmonica playing. They are also joined by a number of guest musicians. If you're in need of a serious blues fix, consider this your heroin. (CM)

The Bygones • *Circles* • **Deraileur Records** • The Bygones play a new country / Americana style just feels like a dirt road into the countryside. Moments of lyrical ironic genius, but musically overplayed at times this release is a tick below average. A few good songs, but falling short of a good overall release. (KM)

The Cadets • *Finding The Straight And Level* • **Snowglobe** • I gave it a chance, I thought maybe this was one of those discs that's charm would grow on me. It never happened. The Cadets sound like a countrified Joy Division, but after a few listens it still did nothing for me. There is talent here, but it misses everything on this recording. (KM)

The Clean • *Anthology* • **Merge Records** • The Clean have been playing since 1978 (except for a while around 1983 where they broke up), and are still going strong. This two CD set includes 46 tracks that span their career, including some previously available only on vinyl. Their garage-



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y, psychedelic sound is as fresh today as it was back then. (AL)

The Corleones • Soundtrack To Suicide • Sickboy Records • This is high-octane rock and roll with loads of punk attitude. The Corleones are based out of Utah. The hand-screened CD is limited to 300 copies. And it's a badass packaging job. The screened art is violently awesome and the inside art is even more awesome. It's a photo of a nude girl covered in blood laying on a bathroom floor with the song titles written in blood on the tile floor next to her. Now that is fucking cool. Luckily, the CD doesn't survive on packaging alone, as the 13 tracks deliver a unique, intense aural experience that is well worth checking out. (CM)

The Damnwells • pmr+1 • In Music We Trust • The title stands for "Poor Man's Record plus one bonus song," as the band is vehemently opposed to the term "EP" to describe a short record. You'd think with a name like the Damnwells, they'd rock hard, but their music is a dreamy, layered amalgam of fine instrumentation. Great harmonic vocals and incorporation of varied, inventive sounds elevate the listener to a higher plane and they slowly inject the serum of soft pop greatness into the brain. (DP)

The Demonic • Ritual On The Beach • Coldfront Records • This is what you get when you mix Cali surf songs from the Pulp Fiction Soundtrack, Beach Boy vocal harmonies and a bit of popish punk rock. The result is a strong collection of well-crafted jams that stand out from the normal congestion of music around today. I can't stress the words "surf" and "punk" enough to describe the vibe within this release, tracks like "Mavericks" and "Bikini Bitch" are a good example of what to expect, which is a harmless album of good time jams to back under the sun to. (JC)

The Dropsicene • Dies Tonight • Happy Couples Never Last • Sound-ing like a mix of late punk, new wave, DC post hardcore, and straight up rock and roll, these boys are on to something. Its interesting to think of something so moody coming from a place like San Diego, their sounds could make you think of something cold, lonely, and beautiful in a climate barren and further north. The Dropsicene have sampled the fare of modern music and offer you this one as their interpretation. (KM)

The Eight Bucks Experiment • Volume Junkie • Blue Moon Record-ings • Imagine if you had an ADD monkey gave him caffeine shots directly into the bloodstream and then locked him in a 10 X 10 room. That might match the sheer chaos the 8 Bucks bring. Sorta a dirty southern bar fight mixed with some spit and whistle. Some metal, some punk and all attitude. (KM)

The Exit • New Beat • Some Records • These three guys from NYC bringing a lot of emotional intensity to the forefront with their full-length debut album. Combining elements of such newer bands as Errortype:11, Jimmy Eat World and The Get Up Kids and older bands such as The Clash and The Police, the eleven tracks all flow into one another perfectly, melding a number of styles to create an ending result that is unique. The heartfelt vocals are supported by the driving energy behind the music that, at times, allows itself to slip into a slower tempo if only to enhance the intensity of the music. Whether it's the pounding drums, the tempo changes or the vocals, every bit of it grabbed my attention. This band doesn't front as punk or hardcore, they're straight up rock and that's just fine with me. (CM)

The Fenwicks • Truth & Memory: Live and Unreleased at Arlene Grocery NYC • self-released • This is the Fenwicks' first recording in two years, and it is of a live performance in New York. They describe their sound as "Afro-Celtic Yiddish Ska Guaranteed To Make You Sweat," and that's a pretty good description. You can't help but start dancing to the beat of each of these songs. Ska might be passé, but who cares! Get this CD and enjoy. (AL)

The First Step • Open Hearts and Clear Minds • Livewire Records • Solid old school straight-edge hardcore. Fast, hitting, and begging to be heard live. Anthem songs covering the same ground you'd come to expect from most bands of the genre, drug-free living, animal rights, and friendship issues. Great for what it is, but nothing groundbreaking. (KM)

The Goodboy Suit • Within Walls Without Windows • Copter Crash Records • Something makes me think of this band as a louder Hoover. Only because they have the same feel of something bigger looming all around the music. Something dark and unsettling hovering about every moment unsure of its intentions. GS have an intensity that strikes at the anvil hard. (KM)

The Graves • Love, Love, Love • Film Guerrero • Sad pop, but you could expect that out of a rainy place like Portland, OR right? Its gentle and it swings, sorta like a porch swing at twilight. It reminded me a little of The Microphones or Elliot Smith with a band. Some of the songs played a little with my emotions and made the quiet afternoon more thoughtful than it had been before, and that's the hope of any kind of art, to affect the people who experience it. (KM)

The Holy Ghost • Color Sympathy • Clearly Records • Indie rock is a real nebulous term, isn't it? I still love to throw it around anyway because you can't go wrong with it. Well, the Holy Ghost is indie rock (damn, that looks kinda funny reading that back), but that doesn't even begin to describe their sound. There's something intangible and highly addictive about

their music. Is it the odd chord progressions, the hypnotic vocal melodies lurking in the mix, or some subliminal quality? Whatever it is, the Holy Ghost is a band definitely worth checking out; make up your own indie rock sub-genre for 'em. (CL)

The Marato • Dirty Stories • Blue Skies Turn Black • Here's some Marato trivia for ya: The band is named for "a promiscuous Grand Dane." Those wacky guys! Band name origins aside, the Marato's serpentine guitar lines and tight rhythm section create a very cool math rock lite sound. Think Television, Mission of Burma, and Don Caballero jamming together. The vocal melodies sweeten the dissonant music, creating an impres-sive debut EP. (CL)

The Neonrauts • Melodic Array of Change • High School Football Records/Sunset Alliance • From jangly indie pop to driving punk rock to a wee bit of funk, The Neonrauts hop from genre to genre effortlessly. The Arizona trio's tunes recall a number of alternative staples, particularly the Pixies (hey, what indie rocker hasn't been influenced a little by the Pixies over the past 10 years?). This is some good stuff from the Grand Canyon State. (CL)

The Others • Latest Rendition • Bad Rep Records • This female-fronted punk/indie rock album was recorded and mixed by J. Robbins and has shook off any idea about an exclusive "emo" label being placed on this band. Aggressive and straightforward, the music here is super tight and mosh pit ready. Not too punk and not too rock, the music is comprehensible and versatile, the guitar work carries the sound while the vocals grab and caress every note on cue. Good stuff here. (JC)

The Perms • Clark Drive • Huglight • The sophomore effort from this Canadian power-pop trio is a delightful, good-hearted collection of fun. The music is inspired by the likes of Ben Folds Five and Weezer, shifting frequently and seamlessly between horns, acoustic, and electric guitars, with great harmony vocals as the centerpiece. This trio could really taste cool success in the future - they've got a great toe tapping, swinging sound that would appeal to a gigantic audience and talent in excess. (DP)

The Skulls • Therapy For The Shy • Doctor Strange Records • Here is a big dose of punk rock kick in the face to keep you thinking straight while you sniff your glue. The songs are totally uninterrupted or obscured by genteel subtleties. This is stand-alone, non-stop rock. (MK)

The Sound of Rails • Night Time Simulcast • Caulfield Records • This is The Sound of Rails' second full length, and in it they take post punk to a new level. Instrumental tracks based on repetition coexist with vocal numbers that showcase their rhythmic abilities, similar in some ways to Fugazi. (AL)

The Teeth • Send My Regards To The Sunshine • self-released • Elements of Cake and high-pitched Elvis Costello-like vocals turn the quirkiness of this indie pop-rock album into a feel good extravaganza. Each guitar, drum, bass and piano part find their spots naturally and feed off of one another's style with energy. To begin with, influences range from the likes of The Velvet Underground, The Beatles, Chuck Berry, David Bowie and Fugazi, the sound of this band is a direct progression forward from what these musicians have already blessed us with. Prepare to be challenged by the sounds that are within this release, the reward is ultimately refreshing in the end. (JC)

The Theory of Abstract Light • self-titled • Odd Halo Recordings • The Theory of Abstract Light is a side project by Ben Carr, guitarist for Five. In contrast to his heavy guitar sound with Five, Carr creates droning guitar atmospheres and acoustic passages that hypnotize the listener. Abstract is an excellent way to describe the sound. (AL)

The Violents • Rebecca's Morning Voice • Mud Records • From the cover and name of this all-girl band, I expected typical riot grrl rock. The first song has a happy clean guitar poppy feeling, but sometimes the tough girl comes through and of course, they say "fucking," so they redeem themselves quickly from the sweet girl moment. One girl sounds Juliana Hatfield-ish while the other one takes on an Elastica feel. The two voices work well together. The album starts off on the mellow side, but switches halfway through to the harder, more riot grrl sound I initially thought they would have. I actually liked the mellow stuff better; they seemed to be doing something in between. The riot songs sound forced and like other typical girl bands. Either way, it seems to have potential. (MP)

The Wake Ups • Wanna Meet...The Wake Ups? • Laughing Outlaw Records • Harmonizing like a Beach Boy and bringing a power-pop guitar laden sound on this rock album with all smiles is this band out of Australia. Originally known as The Scruffs, this album is the band's first and was produced by Michael Carpenter. Simply put, the formula is all here, a feel good rock and roll disc with not many surprises but a clean and crisp straightforward sound. Things do get a little sensitive, just enough to be pushed into radio rotation. Check out "My Friends Are So Boring" and "You Make Me Nervous." (JC)

The Yell Leaders • Noxajoy • The Yell Leaders • This Midwest pop/soul combo brings together a trio of fine musicians that create rock-steady, emotional tunes. There is a great intertwining of male and female vocals leading the group, and this unique combination makes them stand apart

from other artists. These vocals are uttered over such lush and rich instrumentation, you scarcely remember that there's just three of 'em. (DP)

Timescape Zero • Total War • X-Ray Records • Timescape were the kings of South Florida hardcore back when I first got into hardcore long, long ago. The sleeping giant wakes from its slumber with a new album after all these years. This stuff sounds just as solid as they did back in the early '90s, but it pretty much sounds the same as they did in that period too. With a sound that covers the ground of bands like Agnostic Front, and the Cro-mags they come out hitting and don't let up till the last note. (KM)

Toral Toral Torrance! • Get Into It • The Militia Group • The debut from this Minnesota act is loud, aggressive, and distorted, as it very much should be. It is heavy-hitting, in-your-face hardcore punk rock, but with a clean sound and vocals reminiscent of White Stripes. It probably goes without saying that a live show would be far more explosive, energetic, and fitting for this band's talents, but the CD certainly takes you halfway there. (DP)

Tosca • Delhi 9 • IK7 Records • This latest release from Tosca (Richard Dorfmeister and Rupert Hall) is actually two very different CDs. The first is similar to what you might expect from them: groovy tunes for smoky rooms, with mid tempo beats and multiple layers. The second CD is based on piano compositions of an ambient nature. One final note: The CD I reviewed employed copy protection, and would not play on my PC. It also did not play on two regular CD players. Make sure to look for the label stating this on the CD back cover and, buyer beware! (AL)

Toxic Shock • Four Old Seven Inches • Doctor Strange Records • Man, this band is crazy, but on the other hand, pure genius and of the highest intellect known to mankind! That may be just a tiny bit of exaggeration, but you'll have to hear this band for yourself to know what I mean. I had always heard so much about the brilliance of this band, how incredibly intelligent they are and of their "invention of the creepy punk music style." The guitars are distorted far more than any band ever, the bass sounds like that of a Sir Mix-A-Lot song, and the drums are drums! Like the title of the record states, these songs are all super old and talk about the time when punk meant "punk" and how hard it was to live and come by the lifestyle. Now, in the 21st century, this band is still doing what it does best and that is making great music with a good message that will continue to spawn generations of "weird punks" till the end of the world comes upon us. (CMax)

tvfordogs • Heavy Denver • Wampus Multimedia • When Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous disbanded, singer-guitarist Neil Luckett had some unused material that became tvfordogs' debut, *Heavy Denver*. But this is no collection of poorly conceived leftovers and unrealized song ideas. The performance and production are stellar, and belie the fact that these songs were recorded in a bedroom. These radio-ready tunes recall the Foo Fighters, Stone Temple Pilots, and the Catherine Wheel, among others. (CL)

Twinstar • Dovetailing • Jet Black Records • Hailing from the land of beer and cheese, Milwaukee's Twinstar delivers a powerful, emotional debut album without sinking into the whining and sappiness present in so much of what has become known as "emo." The "emo" label doesn't do this

"These songs make one feel young again, like throwing bottles of brick walls and getting drunk in the parking lot before heading to some garage to see a punk rock show."

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record justice; it's just a great rock record that jumps seamlessly from driving guitar rock to sparser, quieter songs to power pop. Tim Hanke's impassioned vocals and thoughtful lyrics are truly a highlight. *Dovetailing* is a very impressive debut album. (CL)

Two Steps To Infinity • For He Who Suffers • self-released • I can't help but think that the vocals and music don't deserve to coexist. The garage metal with a grunge rock edge is chased by lollipop, high-pitched female vocals. I'm talking about a church choir voice here where a stripped down raw sound is throughout the E.P. and the music weaves around with aggression and tempo changes. "Descent" and "Possession" are two tracks that give an indication of what this band has to offer and just how far they've yet to go. (JC)

Until The End • Let The World Burn • Eulogy Recordings • At the forefront of the straight edge resurgence is Until The End, who leave none standing with their heavy hardcore sound. They pound their instruments like no other band, and the guttural screaming will leave you dazed and battered. (AL)

Useless ID • No Vacation From The World • Kung Fu Records • I almost cried when listening to this CD. No, not because I am sensitive, emotional, or upset that I haven't had a girlfriend in 6 months (sarcasm, it's been 7), but that I used to love the "Israel pop-punk-core" this band used to throw down and how they sounded "one of a kind." My feelings have definitely changed. In *No Vacation From The World*, all I hear is lyrics of being "heart broken" or "missing a phone call" and the distinct voice with the sound of MXPX. I think they lost their singer, if so everything is going to go downhill. I support their "Animal Rights" movement and their promotion of PETA and their beliefs, but their music is no longer of any interest to me, even the "Enhanced CD" feature doesn't bring joy to my heart. I officially re-name this CD "Anthems for those who would like to cry." I'm so disappointed; maybe I need a good cry. I think I'll pop this back in. (CMax)

Various Artists • Barricaded Suspects • Dr. Strange Records • This is an old school punk comp originally released on the Toxic Shock label on various 7 inches. If you're a fan of old school punk this is definitely a cd you shouldn't pass up. Cover art by Pushead and great liner notes by Bill Toxic and an all star line up of bands featuring members of All/Descendants and D.O.A. that includes such artists as Killroy, Mad Parade, Peace Corpse and Septic Death. (RP)

Various Artists • Being Black • Spun Records/Waxploitation Records • Inspired by the book of the same name by Angel Kyodo Williams, a handful of conscious hip hop artists and spoken word poet Ursula Rucker contribute to this project. The lone problem here is that most of the tracks included are available on many of the albums you may already have. If you have wanted to get a taste of groups like Jurassic 5, Mystic, Dilated Peoples, Blackalicious and the beats of DJ Revolution, Rob Swift, DJ Spooky and King Britt than this release is worthwhile for you. A portion of proceeds go towards a non-for-profit peacemaking organization called Urban Peace. (JC)

Various Artists • Does Everyone Stare? Presents a Various Artists Compilation • Does Everyone Stare? • This album instantly gets points from me for the cover photo of Elvis Costello's *King of America* LP leaning against a guitar amp. Now, while nothing on this disc sounds much like Elvis, this is still a damn good sampler. Does Everyone Stare offers up twenty-three tracks of punk and emo, and there's not a bad one in the bunch. (CL)

Various Artists • Fighting Music Vol. 2 • Deathwish, Inc. • Four hardcore labels got together to release over 70 minutes of the most brutal hardcore out there. Some of the 35 bands include: Converge, Throwdown, Dead Serious, Striking Distance, American Nightmare, Ringworm, Diehard Youth, I Hate You, and Count Me Out. (AL)

Various Artists • Go Kart Records is the Corporate Giant • Go Kart Records • The folks at Go Kart assembled this collection of thirty punk and metal tunes, half of them unreleased. Artists include Daycare Squirrels, Toxic Narcotic, The Hellbenders, Capture the Flag, Pseudo Heroes, G.B.H., Revolution Summer, Justin Sane, Lunachicks, Anti-Flag and others. (AL)

Various Artists • King Britt presents...The Philadelphia Experiment Remixed • Ropeadope Records • The original Philadelphia Experiment was a critical success, bringing together three musicians from diverse backgrounds to create music. This remix album should also please many, with King Britt responsible for gathering producers to add their own touch to the album. Unlike other remix albums, this one can stand on its own, even if you've never heard the original. (AL)

Various Artists • Pulse From Mid-America • Anatomy Records • Traditionally, I've regarded Indiana as an endless wasteland that makes my drive to Chicago almost unbearable. But now I've got this really cool sampler from Indiana's own Anatomy Records, and I feel my opinion of

the Hoosier state changing for the better. The soothing indie pop sounds of Brando, Early Day Miners, and the Impossible Shapes will help ease my road rage as I head north along I-65. The bouncy, energetic music of Pop Lolita and Sex Tiger will save me from the usual mind-numbing, highway boredom. And the aggressive rock of (Longlive) The Romance Morgue and Racebannon should keep me from passing out while driving through miles and miles of unrelenting farmland. Thank you, Anatomy Records! (CL)

Various Artists • Steve Caballero Bandology Vol. 1 • Sessions Records • One of the most popular skaters in the sport's history, Steve Caballero is also a musical machine. This compilation features all four of his past bands with four songs apiece. Also included are liner notes by Caballero and some of his former band mates. From the Faction's skate punk to Odd Man Out's Cult-ish rock, Shovelhead's Whitesnake influence and Soda's pop punk, Caballero's musical output was as varied as it was entertaining. (AL)

Various Artists • The First Church Compilation • Thick As Thieves • Originally released in 1997, this compilation was considered an important release for hardcore/emo/punk fans. It is now being re-released, complete with written stories about each band's first crush, and many unreleased songs. Bands include: Jimmy Eat World, Jazz June, At The Drive In, and Pop Unknown. (AL)

Various Artists • Uterine Fury Records Fall 2002 Catalog Sampler • Uterine Fury Records • This sampler features four bands from the Uterine Fury: Slobot, The Zenith, rayos-X, and Natur's Incubator. The music ranges from electronica to experimental noise and minimalism. The music is mostly lo-fi, like it was recorded in someone's basement, a quality which fits its experimental attitude. They should get a design prize for the way the CD is packaged: the disc is inserted into an emptied out 5 1/4" floppy disk. (AL)

Various Artists • Will Not Clear Man #1 • Will Not Clear Man • This four song sampler features bands currently working with Illinois label Will Not Clear Man. There's the punk of Seedy Sea Controversy and Burn Elgin, the hardcore Over & Over, and the emo-ish Meridians Divided. It's a great bargain too, as this CD is available for a mere dollar through Will Not Clear Man's mail order. Good music, good price, what else could you ask for? (CL)

Vito • Birthday E.P. • Evol Egg Nart Recordings • Basking in the sunshine of Miami has influenced the sound of this one-man band. The four tracks on this E.P. begin with "Hold On" which is tightly structured inside a popish mellow-to-amped-up tempo sequence. Things change rapidly though. Being a drummer by nature has its benefits for Vito, the percussion work pulls his sound together no matter which direction he takes. On "Punks" he takes on just that persona and on the standout "Decatur" he pays respects to his second home with a little alt-rock edge about lesbians. (JC)

Whisky Rebels • self-titled • GMM Records/Victory Distribution • Again, GMM Records impresses me with another fine line of young lads who know their music and their California punk scene. The Whisky Rebels combine to bring you the Dropkick Murphy's and Madcap sound mixed with a street punk sound that must be doing these boys some good, considering the press loves them and so do "punk rock god's" such as Lars and Tim from Rancid. The Whisky Rebels bring you the tyrannies of the streets of Sacramento, and the flaws of the government in this sweet debut album with punchy chorus lines, captivating drum parts, and Oil guitar solo's at its best! Did I mention they sound a little like Pressure Point, share the same label, and two members? Interesting. (CMax)

Woolworth • Recycler • Boss Tuneage Records • There are hints of punk throughout this collection of songs recorded since 1996 from Chicago's Woolworth, but mostly it's straightforward power pop rock. It includes their past two full lengths, an EP and even six recently recorded songs. I kept picturing Cheap Trick throughout this album, probably from the vocals but there was the occasional guitar solo as well. The vocals are pretty good and get better when the harmonies join. After the first few songs, a lot of them started to sound repetitive. They play good music but Woolworth strays from anything innovative or life changing. But that's not the point of pop rock, right? (MP)

Woolsey Band • Marveling at the Rings • self-released • Pop rock with lots of clean guitar and occasional guitar solos. Acoustic guitars come in at moments and give a twangy country feel. It was lyrically trite and when the background vocals came in, they were usually la la's. I think more harmonies could have given the album a bit more dimension. At times, I heard influences such as Bruce Springsteen and maybe even Train. I kept thinking a cowbell was going to come in at any moment. (MP)

YTBn • Lovely Enough To Destroy • Hazzo Records • Hailing from Osaka, Japan, YTBn has borrowed elements from pop and rock and taken them for themselves. The result is a catchy, somewhat edgy sound that would play well next to the Strokes, even though they kick more ass. (AL)

Vinyl releases

Coffinberry • self-titled 7" • Exit Stencil • Get ready to shake your ass. Coffinberry is a garage rock band. Their style is very catchy, mod-style rock and roll that could be compared in some ways to The Hives or The White Stripes. This recording is live, so it's really raw, making it perfect for the type of music. The guitar-work is strong and captivating while the drums pound out an uptempo rhythm that is extremely hard to resist. (CM)

Drowning Dog / The Deletist • split 7" • Entartete Kunst • Drowning Dog gives us "Crimson", a droning, haunting, bleep-blop electronic journey with spoken vocals overlaying it. The message is one opposing U.S. support of Israel and the genocide that is taking place there. The Deletist performs "Americans Eye Aeroplanes", an instrumental tune that is dark, enveloping and hyper while remaining melodic. Both bands are very experimental, confronting unusual musical styles while taking on controversial socio/political subjects. (CM)

Gold Circles • self-titled 7" • Copter Crash • Picture discs are really cool. However, they often look cooler than they sound. That's not the case here. Gold Circles sound like a heavier version of The Dismemberment Plan. They have that quirky, funky element and unusual vocal stylings that makes The DisPlan so cool. But Gold Circles is definitely heavier, using thick reverbed basslines that boom over the music and they have a more staccato approach to the overall sound. (CM)

Holding On / Coalition • split 7" • Martyr • Holding On hails from Minneapolis and delivers three straight-edge, hardcore tunes in the vein of Judge and Youth of Today. You get rapid fire, screamed lyrics over pounding drums and searing guitar parts. On the flipside you have Michigan's Coalition, dishing out two tracks. They are also along the same lines, but remind me more of Burn or Turning Point. This is an amazing hardcore seven-inch that is well worth checking out. (CM)

Psyche Origami • Perspective 12" • Imperial Fuzz • These guys take your psyche and fold it up into new creations, giving you three cuts to bend your mind to. Combining the smooth, dope ass elements of A Tribe Called Quest with supreme DJ'ing skills, this trio takes hip-hop to a new level. It'll immediately get in your head and have you bobbin' to the beat, savoring the cuts and chillin' to the mix of other instrumental additions (from piano to horns to congas). MC Wyztyk is absolutely on point, rhyming fluidly over beat after beat. This is definitely a crew to look out for in 2003. (CM)

Scott Biao Army / • split LP • Paco Garden • SBA throws a fist down your throat with 10 tracks of rapid fire, screaming, sweat-drenched punk rock. It's raw, thrashy, aggressive, no holds barred rock and roll. The press says these guys rip up the live stage and there's no doubt in my mind that they're telling the truth. On the flip side is Line of Decent. They offer up five tracks that use thick basslines, feedback-heavy guitars and a pounding rhythm to pull you in before they kick you in the teeth. While it's definitely hardcore, there are some dark, metal elements throughout. The end result is a fucking brilliant LP featuring two incredible bands doing their own thing, and doing it more passionately than 99% of the other bands out there. The huge fold-out, newsprint liner notes are simply an added bonus. (CM)

The Braves • self-titled 7" • Johann's Face • The two tracks on this album are extremely good. The Braves are a five-piece from Illinois and this slab of vinyl shows off their ability to craft skillful, mid-tempo, indie tunes. While the music is precise and enveloping, the vocals are even better. Added bonus: clear, blue vinyl and limited to 400 copies. (CM)

The Saddest Landscape • Cover Your Heart 7" • Copter Crash • Holy crap! This is fucking awesome. These guys play meow the way it used to be played, before it started to really suck. This is screaming, aggressive, heartfelt music that will make you feel amazing. You'll want to speed and scream and strip naked and sob all at once. (Please don't.) It has been a long time since I've heard something so honest and intense. Not sold yet? It's on clear vinyl, too! But who cares?! This is great. (CM)

Transistor / Transistor • self-titled 7" • Copter Crash • Wow! This rips out of the gate and doesn't quit. All three tracks by Transistor / Transistor are mind-numbing hardcore math rock tunes. They combine the scream-o, aggressive elements of hardcore with a more technical, focused change of pace along the lines of emo-ish math rock. The end result is a violent journey through melody and chaos, a perfect blend to reel you in and knock you out. (CM)

Vintage Imperial • Mic Club 12" • self-released • This is some underground, indie hip-hop from Atlanta. You get three tracks and each is head-noddin' good. The first cut comes with a bit of a party attitude, keys jangling in the background as the rhymes flow along. From there, the music gets more jazzed up and smoothed out. The beats still bump, but there's a funkier element. Vintage Imperial definitely reach back into vintage hip-hop to form the styles they currently create on wax. The result is some damn fine music that truly defines the underground hip-hop movement. (CM)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

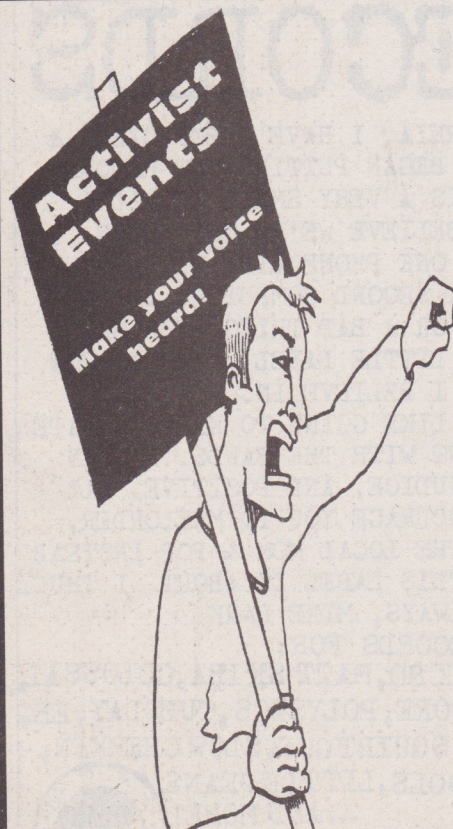
Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

IK7 Records, 425 West 15th Street, Suite 2R, New York, NY 10011
 3 Day Hopper, PO Box 241709, Omaha, NE 68124
 Aalacho Music, no contact info available
 Aesthetics Records, PO Box 82233, Portland, OR 97282
 AIF Records, 37 Bates Road, Harrison, NY 10528
 AK Press, 674-A 23rd St. Oakland, CA 94612
 Anatomy Records, 225 East North Street, #1900, Indianapolis, IN 46204
 Anti Records, 2798 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90026
 Artemis Records, 130 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011
 Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
 Attitude, 1720 Yucca Road, Oceanside, CA 92054
 Bad Rep Records, PO Box 7117, Woodbridge, VA 22195
 BBE, 8b Langton Road, Chislewood, London, NW2 6QA
 Bill Milbrodt, PO Box 441, Howell, NJ 07731
 Blue Moon Recordings, 2075 S. University Blvd. #264 Denver, CO 80210
 Blue Orange Records, 2859 Bush Street #102, San Francisco CA 94115
 Blueskiestumbblack, 214 Thornhill, D.D.O., QC, H9G 1P7, Canada
 Boss Tuneage, PO Box 74, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2WB, UK
 Bottom Up Blues Gang, 3452A Hartford, St. Louis, MO 63118
 Breaker Breaker Records, PO Box 536071, Orlando, FL 32853
 Broken Rekids, Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146
 Burt Switzer, no contact info available
 BYO Records, Box 67609, LA, CA 90067
 Call Me Alice, PO Box 83205, San Diego, CA 92138-3205
 Caulfield Records, PO Box 84323, Lincoln, NE 68501
 Chumpe, P.O. Box 27, Annville, PA 17003-0027
 Claire Records, PO Box 214332, Sacramento, CA 95821
 Coldfront Records, 314 23rd St. Brooklyn, NY 11215
 Coldfront Records, PO Box 8345, Berkeley, CA 94707
 Copter Crash Records, PO Box 6095, Hudson, FL 34667-3095
 Crème Blush, 103 Essex St. Suite 4F, New York, NY 10002
 Crucial Blast Records, PO Box 364, Hagerstown, MD 21741
 Dead Digital, PO Box 94, Manchester, M19 3WY
 Dead Droid Records, PO Box 68061, Grand Rapids, MI 49516
 Deathwish, Inc., 10 Lothrop Street, Beverly, MA 01915
 Derailleur Records, PO Box 10276 Columbus, OH 43201
 Doctor Strange Records, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 90701
 Does Everyone Stare?, PO Box 1006, Edison, NJ 08818
 Dr. Strange, Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701
 Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647
 Entartete Kunst, PO Box 411194, San Francisco, CA 94141-1194
 Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534
 Estrus Records, PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227
 Eulogy Recordings, PO Box 8692, Coral Springs, FL 33075
 Evol Egg Nart Recordings, PO Box 570763, Miami, FL 33257
 Exit Stencil, PO Box 110775, Cleveland, OH 44111

Family Vineyard Records, PO Box 2161, Bloomington, IN 47402
 Fang Records, PO Box 652, NY, NY 10009
 Ferret Music Corp, 47 Wayne St. #3 Jersey City, NJ 07302
 Film Guerrero, PO Box 14414 Portland, OR 97293
 Flashlight Brown, PO Box 19638, 55 Bloor St. W, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3T9
 Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563 Gainesville, FL 32604
 Function 8, PO Box 411195, San Francisco, CA 94141-1195
 GMM Records, PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333
 Go-Kart Records, PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012
 Goodfellow, 762 Upper James St. Ste. 275, Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 3A2
 Goodtimeszy Music, 75 Sparkhall Ave., Toronto ON, M4K 1G7
 Guilt Ridden Pop, 2217 Nicollet Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55404
 Happy Couples Never Last, PO Box 36997 Indianapolis, IN 46236
 Hazzo Records, 82 West 105th Street, #4B, New York, NY 10025
 Henry, no contact info available
 Hollis + Mighty McGregor, 900 N. Grand Ave. #60477, Sherman, TX 75090
 Hopeless Records, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495
 Huglight Records, 521 Doreen Street, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3G 3H5
 Hydra Head Records, PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199
 I.O.U. Records, 412 West Girard Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19123
 Ides Of March, PO Box 722 Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
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 Independent Records, 113 B Stephens St., Chapel Hill, NC 27516
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 Iodine Recordings, 1085 Commonwealth Ave. PMB 318 Boston, MA 02215
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 Kung Fu Records, PO BOX 38009, Hollywood, CA 90038
 Latest Flame Records, 1638a North Astor Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202
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 LES, 301 E66th Street, Apt 5C, NY, NY 10021
 Life Is Bonkers, c/o J. Mohr, 6640 San Joaquin St., Sacramento, CA 95820
 Livewire Records, PO Box 007, Mendham, NJ 07945
 M.H. Records, 36 Central Park Road, Plainville, NY 11803
 Martyr Records, PO Box 995 Harriman, NY 10926
 Merge Records, PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514
 Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St., PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2793
 Michael, 505 Sunset Drive, Athens, GA 30603
 Microcosm Publishing, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97392-0332
 Mishap Productions, 846 Pine Flat Rd., Santa Cruz, CA 95060
 Moodswing Records, 3833 Roswell Road, Suite 104, Atlanta, GA 30342
 Mud Records, 303 West Griggs St., Urbana, IL 61801
 Mush Records, 1742 Laurel Canyon Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90046
 Music Discovery Network, PO Box 6205, Peoria, IL 61601-6205
 Odd Halo Recordings, PO Box 5359, Gloucester, MA 01930
 One Day Savior Recordings, PO Box 372, Williston Park, NY 11596
 Our Soil, Our Strength, 2509 N. Campbell #335, Tucson, AZ 85719
 Paco Garden Records, PO Box 18455, Denver, CO 80218-0455
 Pluto Records, PO Box 1201, McKinney, TX 75070

Pop Sweatshop, PMB 148, 2103 Harrison Ave. NW #2, Olympia, WA 98502
 Pretty Pony, c/o Tramontana, 12251 Knight's Crossing Cr. # 304, Orlando, FL 32817
 Projekt Records, PO Box 9140, Long Island City, NY 11103
 PVC Lotus Records, PO Box 880362, San Francisco, CA 94188
 Red Velvet Revolution, 1074 College Street, Toronto, ON, M6H 1B3
 Ropeadope Records, Village Station, PO Box 1021, New York, NY 10014
 Second Nature Recordings, PO Box 11543 Kansas City, MO 64138
 Secretly Canadian, 1021 South Walnut, Bloomington, IN 47401
 Sensory, PO Box 388, Voorhes, NJ 08043-0388
 Sessions Records, 60 Old El Pueblo Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066
 Sickboy Records, PO Box 2464, Salt Lake City, UT 84110
 Snowglobe Records, PO Box 591581 San Francisco, CA 94159
 Some Records, 51 MacDougal Street, #458, NY, NY 10012
 Spaff Records, 56 Court Street, #4F, Brooklyn, NY 11201
 Spent Records, 444 Humphrey St. #50, Swampscott, MA 01907
 Spun Records, Waxplotation Records - no address
 State Bird Records, no contact info available
 Stone Circle Records, no contact info available
 Substandard Records, PO BOX 310, Berkeley, CA 94701
 Sudden Death, Moscrop PO Box 43001 Burnaby, BC Canada VV5G 3H0
 Sunset Alliance, PO Box 32048, Mesa, AZ 85275
 Surge Recordings, 133 West 25th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10001
 The Blam, 200 West 14th Street, #5E, NY, NY 10011
 The End Records, 331 Rio Grande #58, SLC, UT 84101
 The Fenwicks, 618 Hauser Blvd. #5, Los Angeles, CA 90036
 The Militia Group, 7923 Warner Ave. Suite K, Huntington Bch., CA 92647
 The Teeth, 580 Johnston Drive, Bethlehem, PA, 18017
 The Yell Leaders, PO Box 2, Milwaukee, WI 53201-0002
 Thick As Thieves, PMB 252, 302 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11211
 Thick Records, 409 N. Wolcott Ave., Chicago, IL 60622
 Threespheres, PO Box 349, Brooklyn, NY 11222
 Tortuga Recordings, PO Box 15608, Boston, MA 02215
 Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724
 Two Sheds Music, PO Box 5455, Atlanta, GA 31107-0455
 Two Steps To Infinity, PO Box 230070, Boston, MA 02123-0070
 Uncle Buzz Records, 5014 Arbor Ridge, San Antonio, TX 78228
 Undecided Records, 10695 Lake Oak Way, Boca Raton, FL 33498
 Unmotivated, NHOI, 2677 S. Citrus St., West Covina, CA 91791
 Useless Chord Records, 206 Scholes St. #16, Brooklyn, NY 11206
 Uterine Fury Records, 312 Arrowhead Circle, Spartanburg, SC 29301
 Vintage Imperial, 5960 Brookside Drive, Mableton, GA 30126
 Viper Records, 230 Mott St., New York, NY 10012
 Walk In Cold Records, 8408 Lakeside Drive, Downers Grove, IL 60516
 Wampus Multimedia, 5746 Union Mill Road, Suite 315, Clifton, VA 20124
 Warp Records, PO Box 25378, London, NW5 1GL
 Will Not Clear Man, PO Box 911, Elgin, IL 60121-0911
 Woodshed Prod., 15466 Los Gatos Blvd., Ste. 109-161, Los Gatos, CA 95032
 Woosley Band, 3163 Indianola Avenue, Columbus, OH 43202
 X-Ray Records, 13414 SW 111th Terrace Miami, FL 33186



Out from the Shadows: Ending Drug Prohibition in the 21st Century
 When: February 12-15, 2003
 Where: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán in Mérida, Mexico
 Info: <http://www.stophedrugwar.org/shadows/>

Liberation Now! The National Student Animal Rights Conference
 When: February 21-23, 2003
 Where: San Francisco, CA
 Info: <http://www.liberationnow.com>

CannaTrade.ch Int'l Hemp Fair
 When: Feb. 28-March 2, 2003
 Where: Bern, Switzerland
 Info: <http://www.cannatrade.ch>

Global Women's Strike - International Women's Day
 When: March 8, 2003
 Where: Worldwide
 Info: <http://womenstrike8m.server101.com/>

The Day of Silence Project
 When: April 9, 2003
 Where: Across the U.S.
 Info: <http://www.dayofsilence.org/>

Mobilization Against the U.S. Military
 When: April 10-15, 2003
 Where: Washington, D.C.
 Info: <http://www.lasolidarity.org/>

2003 NORML Conference
 When: April 17-19, 2003
 Where: San Francisco, CA
 Info: <http://www.norml.org>

Protest Against Plutonium Launch
 When: May 3, 2003
 Where: Kennedy Space Center, Florida
 Info: <http://www.space4peace.org/>

Shut Down the World Agricultural Forum
 When: May 18-20, 2003
 Where: St. Louis, MO
 Info: <http://www.biodev.org/>

6th Annual Jacksonville Hempfest
 When: May 31, 2003
 Where: Jacksonville Beach, Florida
 Info: <http://www.jaxhempfest.com/>

Animal Rights 2003 Conference
 When: June 27-July 1, 2003
 Where: McLean Hilton Hotel, Near DC
 Info: <http://www.farmusa.org>

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...Turn, Plant, Harvest, Turn

The Blood Brothers follow up last year's acclaimed *March On Electric Children* with a delivery of spastic but catchy indie/noise rock/roll driven by manic dual vocals and dissonant yet melodic riffs, charged with the fury, energy and revolutionary spirit of fellow status quo disturbers REFUSED and AT THE DRIVE-IN, but possessed of a delivery that is all The Blood Brothers. LP stunningly packaged in a gatefold jacket with a full color 16-page booklet. First 500 copies on heavy, high quality 180-gram virgin vinyl, plus 200 copies available exclusively from this band on tour and/or Second Nature website as double one-sided screenprinted LP. Produced by Ross Robinson (GLASSIAW, SEPULTURA; AT THE DRIVE-IN).

*Given half a chance, The Blood Brothers just may save rock'n'roll. -Exclaim!

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ASIAN MAN IS RUN OUT OF MY PARENTS GARAGE IN SUNNY CALIFORNIA. I HAVE 2 EMPLOYEES & MY MOM HELPS OUT BY PICKING UP MAIL AT THE POST OFFICE. I BEGAN PUTTING OUT RECORDS IN 1991 & STARTED ASIAN MAN IN MAY OF 1996. ASIAN MAN IS A VERY SMALL LABEL! I THINK SOME OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE THE WRONG IDEA AND BELIEVE WE'RE THIS HUGE RECORD COMPANY WITH TONS OF EMPLOYEES. BUT WE'VE ONLY GOT ONE PHONE LINE WITH NO CALL WAITING, A FAX MACHINE, AND JUST RECENTLY PURCHASED A SECOND COMPUTER. DEPENDING ON HOW YOU LOOK @ THINGS, THIS IS EITHER A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING. FOR ME, THIS IS THE ONLY THING. (OR IN OTHER WORDS: I ENJOY BEING A LITTLE LABEL) THIS IS HOW THE LABEL WILL REMAIN. I DO MY BEST TO DO THE THINGS THAT I BELIEVE IN. I DO THIS BECAUSE I LOVE MUSIC. I ENJOY DOING ALL THE LITTLE THINGS LIKE GOING TO KINKO'S LATE AT NIGHT, MAKING ADS BY HAND, READING MAIL, AND HANGING OUT WITH THE BANDS. I ONLY WORK WITH BANDS THAT ARE ANTI-RACIST, NON-SEXIST, NON-PREJUDICE, AND POSITIVE. ALL OUR RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR \$8 THROUGH MAILORDER. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO MAILORDER, BUT IF YOU DO CHOOSE TO BUY FROM A STORE, PLEASE SUPPORT THE LOCAL MOM & POP INSTEAD OF THE SUPER MEGA CHAIN STORE. I HOPE YOU CAN GRASP WHAT THIS LABEL IS ABOUT I TRULY LOVE WHAT I DO. IT'S MY PASSION. THAT'S ABOUT IT. PEACE ALWAYS, MIKE PARK

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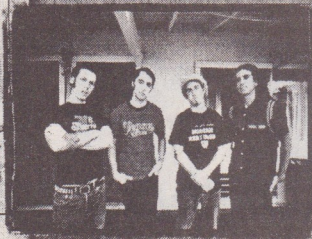
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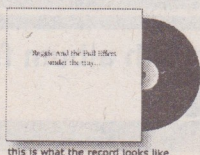
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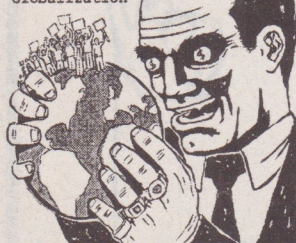
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